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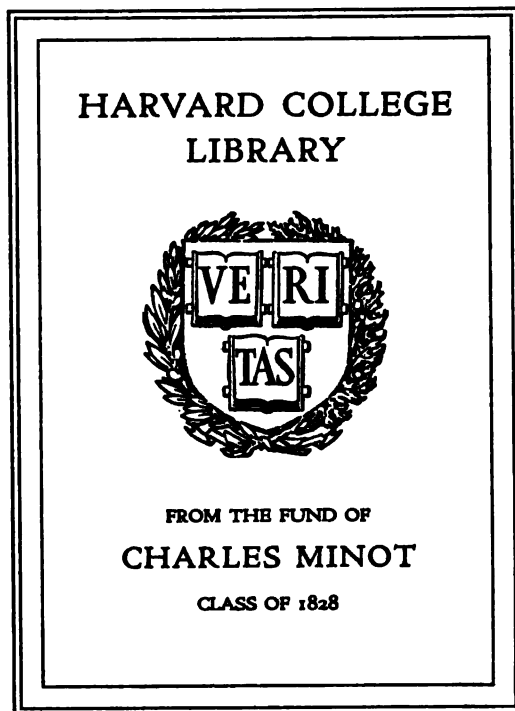
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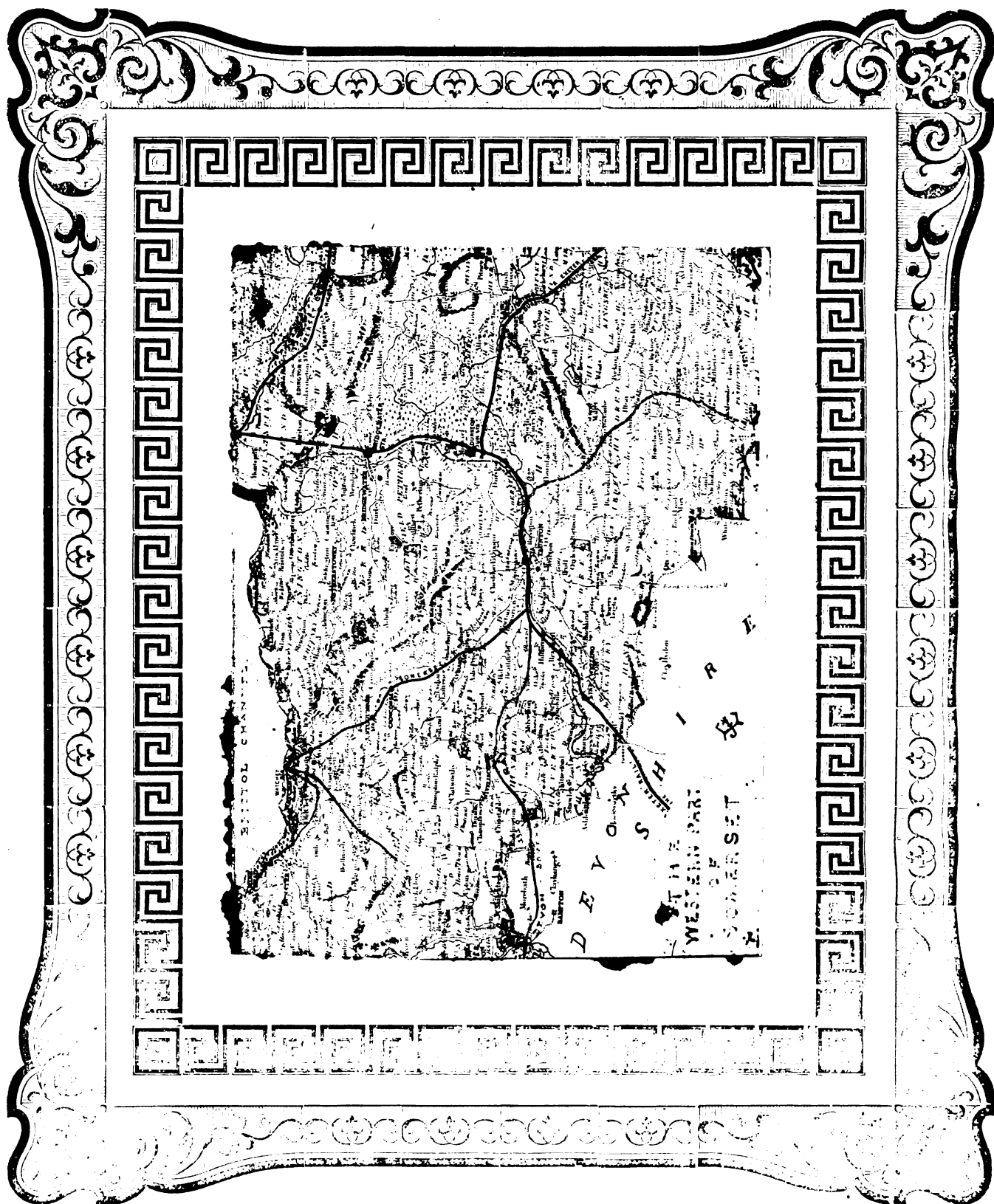












A GENERAL ACCOUNT  
OF  
West Somerset,  
DESCRIPTION OF  
The Valley of the Tone,  
AND THE HISTORY OF THE  
Town of Taunton.

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Illustrated by a New Process of Photography and Heliotype.

---

BY EDWARD JEBOULT.

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J. Taunton:  
SOMERSET AND BRISTOL STEAM-PRESS.  
1873.

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1875. May 8  
miniature



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## Preface.

The compiler of this work feels that some sort of explanation is due to the Public. His literary aspirations are but small, and he had often hoped that a more talented pen would undertake the task. For ten years the collection of local historical facts has occupied his leisure hours; and although his spare time, snatched from the hurry of business or from the duties of his family, has been devoted to it, it has been a labour of love. He has felt a pride and pleasure in collecting some further particulars of this beautiful Shire, and its interesting and historical County Town; and although he yet looks forward to the time when accomplished scholars shall thoroughly describe this lovely neighbourhood, he feels that his little attempt may be of some service until such a desideratum shall be accomplished.

While Archæologists, Historians and other writers have entered fully into their respective subjects, and have often gone far beyond the grasp of the ordinary Public, it has been the aim of the compiler of this work to select such portions of their writings as are of the greatest public interest, and, following the examples of the industrious little bee, to cull the best or sweetest portions only.

The reader will probably remember that for some years past the contents of this book have appeared in various local newspapers in the form of a series of weekly articles on County History. The object of this was to induce the public to challenge the correctness of any statements, so that alterations might be made if necessary before appearing in this work. Should the reader now discover what appears a misstatement, he will do well to remember that these pages have been many years in hand, and that changes have taken place during that time.

With regard to the authorities quoted, and the extracts made, the compiler has endeavoured in all cases to state from whence the information was derived. And it is now his pleasant duty to acknowledge the kindness of many gentlemen and friends in giving him their assistance, and also the many kind and flattering testimonials and compliments he has received during the progress of the undertaking.

It will be observed that the work consists of three separate books, each with its own index, &c.: First, the General History of West Somerset; secondly, a detailed account of the various Parishes in "The Valley of the Tone;" and, thirdly, the History of the Town of Taunton, all brought down to the present time. The labour of collecting information respecting Electoral and other proceedings in the Town of Taunton from the year 1822 (the date of Savage's History) to the present time has been considerable. No figures have been given but such as have appeared in the printed statements. The writer has been much assisted by reference to the *Taunton Courier* of those times, which generally contained a good and impartial account.

With regard to the numerous illustrations, it will be seen that advantage has been taken of the modern inventions in Photography, and that no expense has been spared to embrace the most important Buildings and Residences.

23, High Street, Taunton, 1873.

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Including a general description of this most interesting District; its Formation, Geology, Soil, &c.; the Customs, Habits and Dialect of its Inhabitants at various times; particulars of the Arts, Manufactures and Agricultural Pursuits; description of its Hills, Moors, Abbeys, Castles, Camps, Roads, Rivers, Canals, Railways, &c., with numerous interesting Extracts from the Books and Papers of many talented Authors, and from the published and unpublished Papers of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society, &c., &c.

Dedicated (by permission) to F. M. BISSET, Esq., High Sheriff of the County.

A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF

### The Valley of the Tone,

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This History has been nearly ten years in hand, and was prepared under the express patronage of the late Lord TAUNTON.

By EDWARD JEOULT (Amator Patriæ),

SURVEYOR, &c., 23, HIGH-STREET, TAUNTON.

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ATTENTION IS PARTICULARLY DIRECTED TO THE ANNEXED TESTIMONIALS.

P. T. O.

## Testimonials.

The following extracts have been made from numerous testimonials:—

On the 30th July, 1896, the late Lord TAUNTON thus wrote:—"I have read with interest and pleasure your papers on Taunton. They appear to contain a great amount of information on local subjects, which all connected with the historical old town must be glad to be acquainted with, and which will become still more valuable as time goes on. I shall be gratified by your dedicating your History of Taunton to me, and will take five copies."

In February, 1895, the Rev. T. HUGO wrote:—"Mr. Jeboult—I feel and acknowledge the real value of your labours as a careful observer and hearty lover of the locality of Taunton." In April, 1894:—"Your valuable contributions should be issued in a volume." "Your Gallery of Worthies, just published, might head the list, and would be valued by all interesting pen the neighbourhood." In 1878:—"Send me two copies of your book."

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"The work is divided into three portions, embracing the Town of Taunton, the Valley of the Tone, and then enlarging into West Somerset. At the outset Mr. Jeboult starts with the manifest advantage of having an abundance of material upon which to employ his industrious pen. Any person who sets himself to the honourable task of preserving for his native haunts something like a permanent reputation 'deserves well of the State,' and earns an indisputable title to the *som de plume* of '*Amator Patriæ*,' under which Mr. Jeboult first offered his work. About 350 quarto pages, printed in a light and attractive style, contain a mass of matter which will be found acceptable to antiquarians and general readers. The rich archaeological remains of the county, its political experiences, dialect, literature, physical geography, geology, natural history, modern institutions, societies, corporate bodies, ecclesiastical structures, public works and buildings, educational establishments, and commercial resources—all these are treated of in a comprehensive and exhaustive manner, and reference is made easy by a copious index."—*Somerset County Gazette*.

"A heliotype map of West Somerset forms the frontispiece, and, by a novel process of photography and heliotype, numerous plates are introduced, giving bird's-eye views of all the principal churches, parsonages, manor houses, and most striking landscapes in the district. The undertaking is by no means a mere compilation (as is too frequently the case) of existing, though obsolete 'guides,' but to a considerable extent embodies the result of original plodding inquiry and patient research. The volume is strongly bound in coloured cloth, the covers being emblazoned with gilt. It will make a worthy addition to the library shelf or a handsome ornament for the drawing-room table, and can be purchased at a figure which, bearing in mind the limited circulation generally found for local works, however meritorious, is moderate."—*Western News*.

"The volume is illustrated by a new process of photography and heliotype, consisting of a map of West Somerset, and the various churches, chapels, principal residences, ruins and sites relative to the object of the work, and is bound up in substantial cloth boards, roan edges and gilt title, with fair letter-press, the whole forming a very desirable addition to the library of savant or novice. Such are in brief the characteristics of the work before us, and we have pleasure in congratulating our townsman, Mr. Jeboult, for a successful compendium as the result of his 'labour of love.'"  
*Somerset County Herald*.

"A local antiquary, whose name has often been before the public as an ardent and enthusiastic collector of information relating to the history, and present, of his native county, has just introduced to his compatriots a contribution to the tomes of literature relating to this 'lovely shire.' We have unfortunately become at least rare, if not in some cases extinct. The volume is a rather pretentious one as emanating from the studies of led hours, which we know from experience are few and far between to the of business. Nevertheless, the undoubted approach to completeness of the work manifests testifies to the untiring assiduity of its compiler to it presentable to the public."—*Taunton Courier*.

## West Somerset.



**SOMERSETSHIRE** is an extensive maritime county, situated in that part of Great Britain called the West of England, and connects Devonshire and Cornwall with the other portion of the island. It is bounded on the north by Gloucestershire and the Bristol Channel, on the east by Wiltshire, on the south by Devonshire, and on the south-east by Dorsetshire.

Its greatest length from east to west is about 70 miles, and its breadth from north to south about 40 miles. It is computed to contain 1,028,090 English acres, and to be upwards of 200 miles in circumference.

This county displays a great variety of soil and surface. The north-eastern quarter, including the country between Uphill on the Bristol Channel, and Frome on the border of Wiltshire, and bounded on the south by the hills of Mendip, is diversified by rocky eminences, declining towards the west into fertile plains, and near the sea into moorland—tracts subject to inundation.

The south-eastern portion of the county, on the confines of Wiltshire and Dorsetshire, consists of high downs, appropriated to the pasturage of sheep, or raising of corn; and from Shepton Mallet to Chard is a fertile tract, interspersed with fine meadows and orchards.

The central district, intersected by rivers, comprises extensive fens and marshy moors, where dykes and ditches form the divisions of property, and the land is often covered with water.

Collinson, the historian of Somerset, thus describes the northern boundary:—"From Cleve to Watchet the cliffs rise from fifty to two hundred feet in height, and the coast gradually distends into the fine Bay of Bridgwater, where, at the extremity of Start Point (a long and narrow peninsula), the river Parret immerses into the Channel."

The coast from this place northward is flat, and composed of vast sand-banks, repelling the inundation of the sea, which in ancient times, precedent to the birth of history, washed over these shoals, and flowed up into the country to a very considerable distance, covering with its waters that vast territory now called Brent Marsh, and the moors as far as Glastonbury and Somerton.

The sea after its general retirement paid frequent visits to these parts, and it was found necessary for the security of the country to establish Commissioners of Sewers, who should examine and inspect the sea-banks, ditches, gutters, &c., connected with the sea, and order the requisite cleanings and reparations.

The first commission of this kind upon record occurs A.D. 1304-32, Edward I., when Robert de Clare, Gilbert de Bere and John Gereberd were appointed to the office of inspectors.

After this, similar commissions were issued to the possessors of the manors and lordships bordering on these parts.

At the north-east end of Bridgwater Bay the coast again elevates itself, the lofty rocky promontory of Brean Down emerging, as it were, out of the sea, and forming one of the most conspicuous head-lands on the coast. Nearly opposite it, on the west, is the island of Steep Holmes; and on the east the remarkable hill and village of Uphill, at the flow of the river Axe into the channel.

Northward from Uphill is a flat sandy strand, two miles in length to Anchor-head, at the west end of Worle-hill, which is another vast rocky eminence, and a remarkable object both by sea and land. Here formerly the sea in like manner enlarged its bounds, and flowed to Banwell, Churchill, and other adjacent places, evident vestiges thereof being left behind in marine plants, shells and petrifications.

The most ancient order of people in Britain is justly esteemed the Bardi, who were before the Druids. These bards sang in recitative music the praises of great men, accompanying their voices with a harp-like instrument with ten strings, called cynina. They were of a religious order, and of Phœnician origin.

From whence the name of this county is derived is quite a matter of conjecture. The Belgic Britons, according to their historian, Musgrave, gave it the appellation of Gurlad-ye-haf, or Country of Summer.

Herne translates the name Somersetshire as "The Laughing Summer Field," derived from the Celtic.

The Saxons designated it under the name of Somershire, and its inhabitants were called Sumersetas. We have also the name of Somerton mentioned by Asser in his life of King Alfred, which term, prefixed to the Saxon word Shire, would give Somertonshire.

The sea-coast is extremely irregular, in some parts projecting into large, lofty, and rocky promontories, and in others receding into fine bays, with flat and level shores. The extreme point of the coast westward, towards Devonshire, is a vast succession of huge inaccessible rocks, extending from the limits of that county to Porlock Bay.

The inland parts of this county are no less romantically irregular than the coast, the surface thereof being varied by lofty hills and rocks, long tracts of rich level moor, treeless plains, and bold aspiring woods, the whole forming very beautiful scenery.

Annexed is a short poetical effusion on the hills of this neighbourhood, by the Rev. I. W. Stephenson:—

"Away to the Quantocks!—come, wander with me,  
As fleet as the wild deer, as blithe as the bee.  
The heather is blooming on Cothelstone's crest;  
The bracken is waving o'er Bagborough's breast;  
The dingles of Aisholt are verdant and gay,  
Nor Autumn's fell finger hath seared e'en a spray;  
And Ely's bright brooklets are sparkling along,  
Meandering so bonnie 'mid sunshine and song.

No monarch stands prouder in purple and gold,  
'Mid courtiers all countless and cohorts untold,  
Than we shall this noontide on Willaneck's fair height,  
'Mid gorse, and 'mid heath-ball so blue and so bright.  
Then point not to Devon, and boast not to me  
Our famed southern sister a rival is she:  
A brave 'three times three' for our county we'll raise;  
As 'Garden of England' we'll Somerset praise."

Towards the south-west, near the border of Devonshire, is the fruitful vale of Taunton Deane, whence the Quantock Hills extend north-west to the Bristol Channel. Further westward is the ridge of the Brendon Hills, and at the western extremity is the forest of Exmoor, lying partly in Devonshire.

The loftiest eminence is Dunkerry Beacon, in the

northern part of the county, the summit being 1,668 feet above the level of the sea; and the Blackdowns, south-west of Taunton. Near Minehead are hills of considerable altitude.

The climate is as various as the soil. Near the coast the weather is usually mild, even in Winter. It is almost equally temperate in the vale of Taunton, and in the level districts towards the south and east. On the hills of Exmoor, Brendon and Quantock the air becomes much colder, and storms are not unfrequent. In the central marshes the air is moist and foggy. On the heights of Mendip the cold is extreme; but as the country declines towards the estuary of the Severn, the atmosphere becomes temperate and pleasant, and the heat in Summer is moderated by the sea breezes.

In vegetable and animal productions Somersetshire is by no means deficient. The hills, plains, valleys, rivers and seas abound with commodities useful to mankind and adequate to the necessary wants of life.

The valleys, whether distributed into meads, pasture, or tillage, are in general very rich, and many of the hills a few years since unacquainted with the plough are now, by the improvements in husbandry, brought to such a state of cultivation as to produce large crops of grain. Hemp, flax and teazels are cultivated in considerable quantities. The plains are remarkable for their luxuriant herbage, particularly the moors, on which are fattened great numbers of nearly the largest cattle in England.

With respect to the inhabitants of Somerset, they possess the robust forms and simple manners of an agricultural people. In their speech are found many words and usages of the Anglo-Saxon tongue. "A fountain-head," says Bosworth, "from which some streamlets flow down in every province, retaining their original purity and flavour, though not now relished, perhaps, by fastidious palates."

Quaint old Camden, who wrote about 200 years ago, thus speaks of this shire:—"The Countie of Somerset, commonly called Somersetshire, is a verie large and wealthy region. The soil verie rich, yielding for the most part thereof passing great plentie, both of pasture and corne, and yet not without stonie hills. Exceeding populous and full of inhabitants. Furnished also with commodious havens, and ports sufficiently. Some thinke it was so called for that the aire there is so mild and Summer-like; and in that sense the Welsh Britans at this day terme it Gladerhat, borrowing that name out of the English tongue. And verely, howsoever in Summer time it is a Summer-like county, yet surely in Winter it may worthily be called a Wintery region—so wet and weely, so miry and moorish it is, to the exceeding great trouble and enconbrance of

those that travel in it. But I will believe that this name without all question given from Somerton, a famous town in ancient time, and of all others in the shire most frequented. Considering that Asserius, a writer of great antiquity, calleth the county in every place *Somertunensis*, that is *Somertanshire*."

Murray thus speaks of this county:—"Somersetshire, 'The Pleasant Country,' as it was aptly named by the Saxons, has many claims to this distinction, the land being exceedingly fertile, the climate mild, the scenery delightful."

The variety of surface and quick interchange of hill and valley which characterise Devonshire are here modified by broad vales and marshes, separating the high land into detached ranges; but in point of beauty this county may take rank as it stands—the next to Devonshire—which is a position of no little honour.

The choicest scenery is to be found on the skirts of Exmoor, where the extreme ruggedness of the ground, the abundance of wood and running water, the picturesqueness of the homesteads, and the magnificence of the dark hills, produce the most charming effect. Somersetshire is for many reasons an interesting county.

It embraces the city of Bath, the busy port of Bristol, the Cathedral of Wells, the ruins of the great Abbey of Glastonbury, Cleve, &c., and of the Norman Castle of Farleigh, and many grand and well-preserved mansions of the 14th and 15th centuries, such as those of Dunster, Montacute, and Hinton.

Mr. Parker (an authority on these matters) says that Somersetshire is the richest county in England for old houses; that there is hardly a parish in the county which does not contain an Elizabethan dwelling, or one more ancient. The generality are of the fifteenth century, and some as early as the twelfth; but the latter are rare.

We are informed in Wharton's *Spenser's Faery Queen* "That most of the churches of Somerset (which are remarkably elegant), are in the style of the Florid Gothic. The reason is this: Somersetshire in the Civil Wars between York and Lancaster was strongly and entirely attached to the Lancastrian party. In reward for this service Henry VII., when he came to the Crown, rebuilt their churches." It is but fair to add that this statement is doubted by many.

The history of the county of Somerset might be considered a type of the physical history of England. Its description might be made to form a small monograph, its

subterranean antiquities forming one side, and its present natural history the other.

Somersetshire has long been famous for the fattening of cattle, and the richness of its dairies. The cider made here is of a very superior quality, and is the principal drink of the country working classes throughout the county. Wheat, oats, and barley, together with flax and teazels, are extensively cultivated.

It is the opinion of the late Dr. Buckland, Dean of Westminster (a great authority on these points), that Somersetshire is rich in the various departments of Natural History, and also in fossils, of which many splendid specimens of saurians (collected near Glastonbury) are in the British Museum; likewise in minerals, plants, animals, and fish.

It is not so rich in Roman forts, and other similar works, as some of the border counties are, where of old they were obliged to keep large bodies of troops.

Bath, however, presents many remains of Roman temples, villas, and sculptures; and several Roman roads traverse the county, near which other remains of that people are often met with.

Some of the finest specimens of middle-age architecture exist in this county. The carved work, especially in wood, surpasses that of any county in the kingdom. The rood-screens at Taunton were particularly fine, and some good specimens of ancient domestic buildings have been preserved, owing to the county having been seldom ravaged by wars.

The ancient papers preserved among family records in this county are very valuable, and there are few things of greater interest than the correspondence of former times.

The county, which is co-extensive with the diocese of Bath and Wells, is divided into the three archdeaconries—Bath, Wells, and Taunton. Population of the county of Somerset in 1841, 435,982; in 1851, 443,916.

The cities are Bristol (part of), Bath and Wells. The towns, Taunton, Bridgewater, Yeovil, Ilminster, Frome, Chard, Wellington, Wiveliscombe, Milverton, Axbridge, Bruton, Castle Cary, Ilchester, Crewkerne, Dulverton, Dunster, Glastonbury, Langport, Milborne Port, Minehead, South Petherton, Martock, Shepton Mallet, Wincanton, Weston-super-Mare, Burnham, Highbridge, Williton, Cheddar, Watchet, &c.

Somersetshire contains 40 hundreds, seven liberties, one bishoprick, three archdeaconries, thirteen deaneries, and four hundred and eighty-two parishes, and there are 166 county bridges.

# West Somerset: Its Formation and Geology.



HAVING spoken of the county generally, we now proceed into detail, and propose to consider its various characteristics *in order*. In attempting to describe the state of this part of England from the earliest period, we would ask our readers' impartial consideration if some of the statements we make should not accord with their preconceived notions on the subject. We would remind them that geology has been described as "the youngest of the sciences," so little was it known to the ancients, and, we may add, even until the present age. The latest discoveries of our greatest geologists confirm the complete precision of the truth of the Mosaic description, so beautifully, graphically and wonderfully related in the "Book of Books," and which cannot fail to fill our thoughts with awe and sublimity when we contemplate the works of the Lord, which He has declared are "great, and are sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

It may perhaps be recollected that on the establishment of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, some few years ago, the late celebrated geologist—Dr. Buckland, Dean of Westminster—paid a visit to this town (having previously resided many years in the neighbourhood), and delivered a most interesting address on the soil and natural peculiarities of this county, so rich in subjects of interest. Among these we would mention the celebrated Bone Caves of the Mendips, and the various fossils found in the lias beds. There are also several matters of local interest, not forgetting the sienite of Hestercombe (formerly probably a miniature volcano), and the discovery of antediluvian remains adjoining the bed of the Tone—undisputed facts which strongly bear out the statements of geologists.

The Bible informs us that "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth; and the earth was without form, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Then follows the most simple but sublime description of the creation, and its divisions into periods, or, as they are denominated, days. The duration of these "days" has been a matter of doubt and dispute to many writers. The late talented Hugh Miller says that the result of his most searching investigations has been to compel him to hold that the days of creation were not natural, but prophetic days, and stretched far back into bygone eternity; that for many long ages before man was ushered into being, not a few of his humbler contemporaries of the fields and woods enjoyed life in their present haunts; and that for thousands of years anterior to even their appearance many of the existing molluscs lived in our seas.

That day during which the present creation came into being, and in which God, when he had made "the beast of the earth after his kind and the cattle after their kind," at length terminated the work by moulding a creature in His own image, to whom he gave dominion over all, was not a brief period of a few hours' duration, but extended over, mayhap, millions of years. No blank, chaotic gap of death and darkness separated the creation to which man belongs from that of the old extinct elephant, hippopotamus, and hyæna; for familiar animals, such as the red deer, the roe, the fox, the wild cat, and the badger, lived throughout the period which connects their times with our own. To those who would pursue these most interesting investigations we recommend a perusal of Miller's works, and of a small volume by Professor Gaussen, of Geneva, entitled "The World's Birthday." The learned Professor says, that formerly the surface of the earth must all

have been covered by the sea for a long period, and that many of the old rocks which form the crust of our globe have been composed of beds or layers of sand and mud, deposited at the bottom of a deep and wide sea; that fire has been at work at the same time, and the greater number of our high mountains have been forced upwards by the fire upheaving the rocks as it burst from the burning depths within; and that the interior of our globe is almost entirely composed of a burning mass of melted metal. He observes that we can easily suppose that the boiling abyss of waters which covered this globe of fire might send up great clouds of thick dark vapour, and can also easily imagine that the terrible struggle between boiling oceans and melted rocks everywhere bursting up beneath them might bring back night upon the earth, and cause darkness to wrap it round on all sides, till, after a long contest and new combinations of metals and gases, the light appeared once more. The great abyss of waters which had overflowed the whole earth threw themselves, at God's command, into the vast depths prepared for them, and were surrounded with barriers which their wild waves dared not cross.

Life at last began on the earth and in the air, the store-houses of food for the plants were prepared, and the great family of plants appeared. The earth, at God's command, brings forth her buds. Trees and grass, and all green things, spring up in beauty. It was the reign of plants, when the earth was covered with mighty forests such as no human eye has ever seen, although we may imagine their beauty from their vast remains and the dark pictures of their graceful leaves and tall stems which they have left printed on the rocks below the surface of the earth. The coals that warm us and the gas which lights us were stored up long ages ago for our use, deep below the surface of the earth. Living plants and trees were created, which had their seed in themselves, the seed from which they are renewed, raised up again from generation to generation, from age to age, till the end of the world.

The following beautiful remarks on the subject are from the pen of the Rev. W. A. Jones, secretary of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society:—

"The materials for the physical history of the earth, almost from the very dawn of creation to the present age, are scattered around us everywhere. The record may not always be as clear and distinct as a written record might have been; but it has been infinitely more durable and more trustworthy. It carries us back to ages long before the hand of man could possibly have registered the events to which it refers. The great facts and phenomena in

this history are not written with the pen on perishable parchment—not cut by sculptor's art in slabs of stone or plates of brass. The record is writ, by the Almighty hand itself, upon the rocky tablets of everlasting ages. The chief actors and agents in the successive dramas of development in creation are brought before us, or leave unequivocal traces of their existence, and the clearest indications of their works and their ways.

"The successive strata which compose the crust of the earth are so many pages in the great book wherein the history of the earth is recorded; and the fossils in our own museum are but portions of the language by which the facts are revealed. It is so, likewise, with the objects with which the science of archaeology is concerned. The ruined abbey, the vacant hearth of the baronial hall, the crumbling turret of the battlemented castle, the mystic enclosure of Druidic worship, the worn-out traces of the hut circles of our Celtic ancestors, are, to the thoughtful observer, lasting memorials full of interest and significance in the social history of our race and our country. They help us to realise and, in imagination, to reproduce the various phases of social and religious life which have prevailed from age to age. They constitute the leading elements in the tableaux on the great diorama of our national history, presenting to us successively the sublime and, what we believe to have been, the simple and purely monotheistic worship of our Celtic forefathers, the idolatry and refinement of the Roman invaders, the lordly state of the barons, the learning and charity of the monks, whose cloisters and whose cells in ruined abbeys become associated in our minds with the patient toil to which we are indebted for those invaluable manuscripts which open to us the treasures of classic and of sacred lore.

"Among the fossils and rocks in the museum of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society at Taunton, illustrating the geological formations of this county, we have a large and valuable collection of bones, which throw much light on the more recent deposits, and help us to picture to ourselves the leading features of the animal and vegetable world in this district, during the time when our beds of gravel and diluvial earth were deposited. To this subject we purpose now more especially to direct our attention; and for this we have ample materials at hand.

"The trunk of fossil oak dug up from beneath what are now the foundations of Taunton Gaol; the beautiful and wonderfully perfect head of the rhinoceros, recently found in the same locality; the tooth of an elephant, from Quantockhead; and the collection of bones from the Mendip Caverns—what are they to the scientific observer?"

Mere pieces of timber, and fragments of bone? No; science endows them with a living spirit; and under their guidance we enter upon the regions of the unknown world. They bid the darkness of past ages disperse, and reveal to us the haunts, in our immediate neighbourhood, of those animals which are now the denizens only of tropical climes.

"It may seem sheer fancy, the soarings of unbridled imagination, confidently to assert, as we now do, that the bear, the tiger, and the hyæna, have had their lair in the thickets around the Mendip and the Quantock Hills; that the elephant has trampled down under his huge feet the trees of a tropical forest in the dells of Somersetshire; and that the rhinoceros was wont to bathe its unwieldy form in the waters of our own river Tone. Yet we feel assured that, when we have had laid before us the evidence which leads to this conclusion, we shall readily admit that it is *not* a fiction, but a fact. The evidence is simply this: Here are the bones of the animals to which we have referred. They were all found in this county, under circumstances which (as we can show) most clearly prove that the animals to which they belonged lived near to the places in which the bones were found, and some, at least, were born there. These animals do not belong to the earlier geological formations. The state and condition of the bones prove this. If you carefully examine them, you will find that the bones from the Mendip caverns differ materially in character from the fossil bones of the saurians. For example, the bones of the saurians are mineralized; these are not. The same is true of the remains of fossil wood. The timber found under Taunton gaol has been turned on the lathe into boxes and trays; but the fossil wood from Portland could not be so treated.

"We will not attempt to fill up the details in this picture. Having supplied you with the facts, we must leave each one to imagine the altered aspect which the forest trees and tropical foliage of that period would give to our hills and dales. That these features of vegetable life were the accompaniments of the particular forms of animal life in those ages, as well as in this present age, is more than probable, only with such modifications as would account for the appearance of the hazel and the alder, found in the excavations at Taunton. The picture thus realised may be novel and grand; but the actual living picture, with which we are now favoured in the Vale of Taunton Deane, and in the dells of Somerset, is, nevertheless, far better and more to be desired."

Boyd Dawkins, in a paper read before the members of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, thus observes:—

"Let us now attempt to realise the strange inhabitants of our county during the later Pliocene bone-cave period. The relations between land and water are changed. A level plain extends westward into the Bristol Channel, and, probably, far away into the Atlantic. Forests of beech and yew, and thickets of hazel, occupy the drier ground; the willow, the fir tree and the alder fringe the swamps. Here and there upon the mountain patches of greensward peep from among the trees, while bare grey masses of limestone on the mountain side are brought out into strong relief by the surrounding woods. Some of the lowlands also are treeless, and form prairies, minatures of those of North America. Thus far we are, to a certain degree, at home: the trees and even the mosses, and, probably, also the wild flowers, are the same; even the main features of the landscape are identical. The Quantocks and the Mendips and the Blackdowns are still overlooking the level plain at their feet. Thus far, but no farther. In the forests lurk the lion and the bear, ready to spring on the rhinoceros and the deer and the gigantic ox, as they pass to their watering-places. Wolves hunt down the reindeer. The hyænas issuing at the approach of night from their dens, drag back again mammoth or rhinoceros from the woodlands, or red deer, Irish elk and reindeer, but more frequently horses, from the plain, and hesitate not to attack lion or bear, even in their prime. In the woodlands the mammoth, shielded by a woolly covering from the inclemency of this Northern climate, browses off the young shoots of our present trees, and horses wander over the open plain. In the foreground stands man, fire-using and acquainted with the use of the bow, but far worse, armed with his puny weapons of flint and chert and bone, than his contemporaries with their sharp claws and strong teeth. And the very fact that he held his ground against them shows that cunning and craft more than compensated for the deficiency of his armament. He was, indeed, in a worse situation than the bushmen of Port Natal, for they have to contend against less formidable wild beasts. Yet even here we find that the relation between herbivore and carnivore remains constant, though the terms vary. As the deer and mammoth were larger than in existing nature, so was the destructive capacity and the size of those animals which preyed upon them—the lion, wolf, bear, and hyæna proportionably increased.

"Next comes a blank—a period about the duration of which no estimate can be formed; but that it was enormous there can be little doubt, for in it the cave lion, bear, and hyæna, the rhinoceros and the elephant, became extinct. That it was a period of submergence is shown by



the submarine forest overlying the *Elephas primigenius* clay on the north coast off St. Audries.

"Next comes an upheaval (which we believe to be going on now), during which the shingle and the sand containing recent marine shells, in places now far inland—as, for example, at Westonzoyland, Middlezoy, and Burtle—were first formed, and afterwards the alternation of fine alluvial clay and peat, in the latter of which canoes, celts, and other traces of man are found. When man was placed in this beautiful world, he was pure and upright; perfect in health and strength; perfect in beauty both of body and mind; perfect in understanding, happiness and innocence, formed to enjoy God, to reflect His image, and to glorify Him."

Dr. Buckland, speaking on the subject of man, observes that the rich marsh lands of Somerset produced well-formed and well-fed inhabitants and cattle, and that the soil of a country told in a very marked degree upon the general appearance and character of the inhabitants. In an address to the members of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, previously referred to, the learned gentleman said that when travelling over Europe in 1820, with a German geologist more observant than himself of such matters, whenever they came to a town where there were more pretty faces than usual, his companion would say—"We are coming to a good geological formation." And the moment they got into the mountain regions—the Alps, for instance—ugliness was the universal characteristic. There was as much difference between the inhabitants of the rich valley and the mountaineers as between one of our well-fed beasts and a half-starved Irish or Welsh bullock. Let the soil be red, and it never would be bad. The summits of Quantock and Exmoor, being of blue slate, were sterile; but the moment they came to Dunster Castle and Nettlecombe, where the soil was red and the climate mild, they found the finest oaks in England—oaks which were sent for from Liverpool, to make the stern posts of the largest vessels. They had in the low Somersetshire valleys the very fat of the earth—the scourings of the impoverished hills about Sherborne, which were washed down the valley to make the fertile marsh lands that extended from Ilchester to the sea. Into the fertile valleys of the Parrett, the Brue, the Tone and the Axe the goodness of the country was swept, to form the rich grazing lands that lay along the rivers. The best lands of Somerset were of three kinds—marsh lands, red marl, and sandy loam of the lower oolite formation. Mines of lead and zinc were worked long ago by the Romans, and still are worked, though scantily, on the Mendips.

Referring to the connection between geology and archi-

tecture, Dr. Buckland observes that Wells Cathedral was built of stone from Douling, near Shepton Mallet—a subdivision of the inferior oolite formation—of a very enduring character. The beautiful church of St. Mary Magdalene, in Taunton, was built of Keuper sand-stone, and which had much decayed. The ashlar were of Ham-hill stone, which was also decaying, the quality of the stone being inferior to some which had been obtained at Ham-hill in times previous to the building of the Taunton churches. At Ilminster, Yeovil, and Crewkerne, houses were built of a yellow sandy stone, of the lower oolite formation. So they were in the towns of Towcester and Northampton, where it bears the local name of "gingerbread rock." The Bath stone was used abundantly in London and elsewhere.

On the subject of the Quantock Hills Dr. Buckland said:—

"If we ask the cause of this extensive elevation of a chain of hills, 20 miles long and from 3 to 6 miles wide, and from 200 to more than 800 feet in height, we must refer it to the same uplifting and explosive force of vapours, generated within the earth by subterraneous fires, which are still producing earthquakes and exploding ashes and streams of lava in regions which are at this time agitated by nearly 200 burning volcanoes on the actual surface of the globe. Fractures and dislocations which attended the elevation of these strata from the bottom of the sea may be seen in the rocks of Cheddar Cliffs, on the east flank of Mendip, in the yawning chasms of Brockley Combe and Goblin Combe, on the west side of Broadfield-down, near Bristol; and in the gorge through which the Avon passes at Clifton. But the vents that have discharged igneous rocks in the hills of Somerset are few. One at Hestercombe, in the south flank of Quantock, was described by Mr. Horner more than 30 years ago. A second was noticed by himself in 1817, on the N.W. shoulder of Broadfield-down, near the upper terminus of Brockley Combe. Of this he published no account, and he was not aware that it had been recognised by any subsequent observer. A third had been laid open by a railway-cutting at the west end of the Mendip chain, near Uphill. The lias extended largely over England, France and Germany. The lias was not only of use to the architect for making Roman cement and pavements, but most useful also to the palæontologist. The animals of the lias were, indeed, most awful monsters. They were creatures which, had the present company been living in their age, would have swallowed us up in less time than it would take to tell the story."

In the opinion of Sir W. Trevelyan, "Somersetshire

presents as good a field for investigation as, perhaps, any county of the same size in England. It has the natural advantages of varied soil and surface, and contains many important remains of mediæval antiquity. It is very desirable that it should be explored thoroughly and systematically, before the works of Nature or remains of Art suffer any further change from the progress of cultivation or through the lapse of time."

We close this chapter with a short graphic account by a modern writer.

"The geology of Somersetshire embraces a long series of formations, which produce variety in the forms of the hills and the character of the vegetation. First in order come the alluvial deposits, forming those extensive fens or 'levels' on the shores of the Bristol Channel—districts dreary and monotonous enough were it not for their boundary of hills, but exceedingly valuable as pasture-land. They are intersected in every direction by dykes for drainage, and in places contain deep beds of peat and the fossil remains of ancient woods, chiefly oak. Of the cretaceous strata, chalk occurs but sparingly, capping some of the hills at the range of Blackdown. The green sand is more abundant. It is also found at other detached eminences. The various beds of the oolite are largely developed, forming the bold hills about Bath, and ranging thence by Frome, Bruton, Yeovil, and Ilminster. They yield the various building-stones—the great oolite, that of Bath; the inferior oolite, those of Dundry, Doultling, and Ham-hill. Next to these appears the lias, skirting the oolite on the north and pierced by its outliers, such as the ridge of Dundry and Glastonbury Tor; and below the lias the new red sandstone, forming the rich vales of Western Somerset. The busy coal-fields of Bristol and Radstock point out the locality of the coal-measures, and the craggy

rocks of Cheddar and St. Vincent those of the mountain limestone, which rests upon the flanks of the Mendip chain, and rises in outliers on the coast between Bristol and Clevedon. Lastly, the old red sandstone, or Devonian, is to be sought for among the wildest scenes of the county, on the sterile waste of Exmoor, which is wholly included in this formation, and on the lofty hills of Quantock and of Mendip, of which it constitutes the axis. Among the products are coal, found only in the hilly tract between Mendip and the Lower Avon; lead, manganese, copper ore, spars and crystals, and also silver, from the Mendip hills. From the Quantock hills lead and copper ore have been excavated; calamine from the Broadfield Downs and other hills, iron ores from various places, and in the rocks near Porlock have been found small quantities of silver. Granite has been quarried at Hestercombe, a few miles north-east of Taunton; and at Combe Down great quantities of excellent freestone for building purposes are obtained. The existence of such towns as Bath, Wells, and Taunton, in the richest valleys, and the non-existence of any towns at all upon the tops of Quantock or Blackdown, or Exmoor, depended upon geological causes. Why were the meadows of Bridgwater and the rich marsh lands of Somerset so productive of fat cattle and well-fed inhabitants? Why was the Vale of Taunton favoured so much before all other localities in—we might say almost in the whole world? The answer evidently will be, 'From geological causes.'"

—Somerset,

Thy verdant vales, so fair to sight,  
Thy lofty hills which fern and furze embrown,  
Thy waters that roll musically down  
Thy woody glens, the traveller, with delight,  
Recalls to memory."



# West Somerset:

## Its Early Inhabitants and History.



IN our previous article we traced the progress of the preparation of the earth for man's occupation, and endeavoured to describe the Somersetshire of pre-Adamite times. Man had just been introduced upon the scene; but who shall describe the changes which then took place?

It will require a greater than human historian. God has not left us in darkness on these subjects. He has given to us the testimony of His Holy Word—so grandly described in the Mosaic books! And He has also given us "The Testimony of the Rocks." And these accounts, when rightly understood, cannot disagree, for they have the same Author, and His attribute is Truth.

Somersetshire is rich in various specimens of antediluvian plants, trees, insects and other species of animal creation. In the latter class we exempt man, although we have been called upon at various times to believe that even the remains of man have been discovered. In the year 1725 some remains were found about which a German philosopher wrote a treatise, in which they were described as those of an antediluvian man—one of the wicked beings who perished at the flood. But unfortunately he overlooked several important facts—that the specimen had no teeth—that there were no ribs—and, worst of all, that attached to the body there was a very long tail. This specimen would have been a very lucky one for the author of the "Vestiges of Creation," who would have argued, most learnedly, that in our higher development from that period we had left this important appendage very far behind us. These remains have, however, since been proved to belong to a salamander!

The proofs of the General Deluge are shown every-

where. Nearly all the traditions of ancient nations embrace it. The tops of our hills are full of evidence, in the multitude of shells and other marine deposits, which reason forbids us to believe existed there at the Creation. The Scriptures inform us that at the awful time to which we refer "the fountains of the great deep were broken up, the windows of Heaven were opened, and the waters covered the highest hills."

How soon after this the descendants of Noah travelled northwards and peopled this isle, History does not inform us; but there is reason to believe that very many centuries had first elapsed.

It would appear that the lower creation were in possession of Somersetshire long before man; for in the discovery lately made in the Bone Caves of the Mendips remains of animals were discovered far beneath the bones of man or of any implements or remains of man. Of the settlers little is known; but, according to Phelps, early historians inform us that "the Celtic inhabitants of Britain retained possession of the country until about the period B.C. 350, when the Belgæ invaded the country from the neighbouring shores of Gaul. About 250 years after their settlement in this country, B.C. 100, Divitiacus, King of the Suessones, in Belgic Gaul, and who had kept an intercourse with the Belgæ in Britain, came over to assist the Belgic tribes in extending their territories, and to drive back the Celtic inhabitants into the more remote parts, among the inhospitable mountains of Scotland and Wales.

The genial temperature of the climate became attractive, being so superior to that from whence they had originally migrated on the banks of the Rhine. They were well acquainted with the working of mines, as the remains of

their establishments for smelting the ore, found in Somersetshire and in the West of England, fully testify. They also understood the art of making pottery, as the numerous vessels, found in opening their barrows or tumuli, afford abundant proof—some formed by the hand, others made after the introduction of the lathe or wheel.

The religion of the Celtic and Belgic Britons was known under the name of "Druidism." Remains of Druid circles are to be met with in various parts of this neighbourhood, of which we propose to give further particulars elsewhere. The Druids exercised great power over the people. Their priests inculcated the love of virtue and detestation of vice. They believed in, and acknowledged, the being of a God, the governor of the universe, to whom all things were submissive and obedient. They called this great Power the author of everything which exists—"the Eternal; the ancient and awful Being; the Searcher into concealed things; the Being that never changeth; of boundless justice and infinite power." They were forbidden to represent him in a corporeal form; they dared not even to think of confining his worship within walls, but were taught that it was within woods and consecrated groves they could serve him properly; and he seemed to reign in silence, and to make himself felt by the respect he inspired.

The rank of a Druid during the ages of their authority was of the highest order; their influence on all subjects of the most considerable nature and extent, particularly in religious matters, in which it was absolute and supreme. "No sacred rite," says Diodorus Siculus, "was ever performed without a Druid. By them, as being the favourites of the gods and depositories of their counsels, the people offered all their sacrifices, thanksgivings, and prayers, and were perfectly submissive and obedient to their commands."

The chief cities of the Belgæ were Ivelchester, Bath, and Winchester, two of which are within the limits of our county, and prove in some measure that this was, as it were, the metropolitan seat of their empire.

A long succession of savage and tumultuous contentions intervened betwixt this period and the arrival of the Roman arms in the Belgic States of Britain. We cannot, in these brief chapters, attempt to follow in detail the history of our county. Far abler pens than ours have done this, and to their works we must refer those who want the full particulars. We only select such portions as more particularly bear on the history of this part of the country.

Collinson gives us the following outline:—During the

stay of the Romans in this region they exerted their national activity in building themselves towns, throwing up roads from station to station, and in fabricating camps as occasional places of security—*Aquæ Solis* (or Bath), and *Iscalis* (Ivelchester), and those places whose ancient names are not transmitted to the present day, but are demonstrated to have been Roman by the foundations of their walls, and the discovery of unquestionable relics of Romanity. Among the Roman stations are Hamden, Wallow, Coker, Conquest, Wiveliscombe, Street, South Petherton, Yeovil, Stogumber, &c.

The Romans quitted this country between A.D. 440 and 444; and the Saxons, insidiously supplying their stations and subverting the general economy of the country, imposed upon this province the new name of "Somersetshire"—either from Somerton, the chief town at that particular period therein, or in regard to the fact that they found this the seat of summer, compared with the frigid situations they had so lately abandoned. In their division of this kingdom into petty states (in effecting which much blood was shed to obtain little territory), Somerset constituted part of the kingdom of Wessex, or the West Saxons.

In the reign of King Ina, a prince in prudence and moderation, much unlike the majority of those who swayed the Saxon sceptre either before or after him, Christianity, notwithstanding the disorders and confusions which necessarily attend the emulous contentions of barbarian powers, began to dawn and to become the national religion of Britain. It was about this time that this part of the country is said to have received a visit from Joseph of Arimathea; and although some doubt this visit, it must at least be granted that Somersetshire acquired the rudiments of the Christian religion as soon, if not much sooner, than most other parts of Britain. The monastery of Glastonbury and bishopric of Wells were then founded, and other works of piety were instituted.

The reign of good King Alfred, who was the fifth in succession to Egbert, the reducer of the Saxon Heptarchy into one sole dominion, was marked with many troubles. The division of England into tithings, hundreds, and counties, is generally supposed to have been the work of King Alfred. History, however, informs us that these divisions existed long before that monarch swayed the sceptre of this kingdom, and were recognized by the laws of Ina, King of the West Saxons, previous to the seventh century. Many, if not all, of these laws were made at his royal Palace in Taunton.

A tithing consisted of an association of ten freemen, householders, answerable for each other. The hundred

is an ancient division of the shire or county, and was formed by the incorporation of ten tithings.

The story of the retreat of King Alfred at the Isle of Athelney, at the confluence of the Tone with the Parrett, is too well known to require repetition.

The Danes were a furious people sprung from the frozen bosom of the North, and had in Alfred's time nearly overrun the whole of Britain and desolated almost every province. Somerset, Wilts and Hants were the only districts to which they had not conveyed the terror of their arms. At length, A.D. 878, they entered these confines, and, after many encounters, in which the efforts of placid, expiring virtue gave way to the increasing violence of savage cruelty, Alfred was constrained to seek a humble asylum, and await the day wherein Providence should place him peaceably on his legal throne. Nor was it far distant. At Edington he defeated the combined body of the Danes, and, retiring to his court at Aller, he caused Guthrun, the pagan king, to receive the rite of baptism, in gratitude to God, and laid the foundation of a noble monastery to the honour of St. Saviour and St. Peter the Apostle, at Athelney, the seat of his pristine solitary retirement.

After a prolix series of invasions, battles, and innovations, well known in British history, William, Duke of

Normandy, ascended the British throne in full possession of all the various estates of England. Those in this county (exclusive of what he chose to reserve for his own private use, and which had been the royal demesnes of Edward the Confessor) he distributed to religious foundations, and to persons who had adventured their fortunes and lives in his rash but successful expedition—a great number of estates, held under the respective lords as they themselves held under the crown, by military service. On the principal estate or head of each barony castles were erected, and the several owners were by their tenure obliged to support the outrages of ambition and the madness of crusades.

In Domesday Book we have a record of the Anglo-Saxon population, &c., in Somersetshire, which was as follows:—

Chief proprietors, 46; King's thanes, 17; other proprietors, 11; villans, 4,947; borderers, 4,377; slaves, 1,565; cottagers, 299; coliberts, 156; coscecs, 43; fishermen, 21; swineherds, 57; mills, 323; pastures, 156; woods, 206.

Altogether the whole population was not equal to the present population of Taunton.

The feudal system being in its improved state introduced into this country by the Normans, the lands which heretofore had been possessed by thanes and vassals of the Saxon Court, were now condensed into large baronies, each comprising various manors and estates.



# West Somerset :

## From the Norman Conquest to the Reformation.

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ANY of the ancient castles of this county were either established or rebuilt during this period. A review of the manners and customs of the people of the middle ages cannot fail to prove interesting to our readers. We therefore annex the following account extracted from Knight's celebrated illustrated work on the "Antiquities of Old England" :—

"The manor-house of the period presented in many respects a great contrast to one of the present day. Although chimneys, when introduced, resembled the modern, the coarse habits which existed side by side with magnificent taste and talent, induced the preference of a hearth in the midst of the hall, whence the smoke of wood and turf (for coals were seldom used) ascended to blacken the roof. Fashion partially banished the tapestry from the best rooms, and painted wainscoting was preferred. Ornamental carved furniture enriched the stern and sombre interior of this feudal home. The fabrication of armour gave a lively impulse to the metallic arts, for which the lord had workshops on his estate, and many beautiful articles were produced for church and household display. Candlesticks were furnished with a spike at top on which the candle was stuck, sockets being of later contrivance. The coins of this period are of great rarity. Royal mints continued in the chief towns and on the principal estates; and in the reign of Stephen every castle was said to have its mint. There was but one coin, the silver penny (at least no other has come down to us), and the penny was broken into halves and quarters to form halfpence and farthings.

"Our great woollen manufacture is to be dated from this period. The art of weaving cloth we owe to the Flemings. In 1197 laws were laid down regulating the

fabrication and sale of cloth. Linen was also manufactured. The guilds, or incorporated trades, date their origin from this period. The weavers, fullers, and bakers were the earliest; other trades followed; but the next period is the chief one when these important and peaceful associations were formed. Thus far, their object seemed mutual succour; but it was extended afterwards. Ladies of rank employed themselves in embroidering tunics, veils and girdles for themselves, robes and banners for their knightly husbands and sons, gorgeous vestments for their favourite clergy, storied tapestry for their chosen church. The native English at the Conquest were said to be a rude and illiterate people; but William and his successors loved and favoured learning, which had its chief source with the Arabs who had conquered Spain. This was the golden age of Universities. But attainment rested with the clergy. The common people we do not wonder to find untaught, for that has been generally their fate everywhere, but the nobility were scarcely better. There were two great classes, equally proud and eminent, dividing between them the mastery of the rest. These were the men of the sword and the men of the pen—in other words, the soldiers and the monks. Scholastic logic stood first in the rank of studies, and lorded it over all other. Abstruse learning was indeed followed with such intense zeal as to be fatal to polite literature. Poetry was cast out contemptuously to glee-singers and troubadours; and though rather more respect was paid to music, it was only such as was suited to the choir. The most elegant art practised in the monasteries was the emblazoning of initial letters in manuscript books. The scribe usually left blanks for these letters, which were afterwards filled up by artists, who exercised a rich invention in the pattern, and executed them with the aid of gold and silver. As

the twelfth century advanced, these manuscript books were often made of prodigious size. The sports of the Norman lords were chiefly hunting and hawking; the English were forbidden to use dogs or hawks, and had to resort to gins, snares, and nets, when they durst follow these sports at all. It was some time before the Conqueror or his successors permitted the tournament, which might have been dangerous before the two nations became amalgamated; but the noble students of chivalry practised military sports, of which the principal was the quintain, in which the young man tilted with his lance at a shield or Saracen elevated on a pole or spear, past which he rode at full career.

"This exercise was imitated by the young men who were not blessed with noble birth, a sand-bag being in that case substituted for a shield or a Saracen, and a quarter-staff for a lance. To this were added the water-quintain and the water-tournament, rendered more exciting by the chance of immersion in the river in case of a failing blow. Such pastimes strengthened the muscles and the nerves, and inured a warlike race to take delight in overcoming difficulty, encountering peril, and enduring pain. But if these promoted the courage and agility required in war, others, even for children's enjoyment, stimulated a horrid love of cruelty and bloodshed. Excellent schoolmasters they must have been whose pupils were in the regular habit of bringing a fighting-cock on the Tuesday of Shrovetide to school, which was turned into a pit for their amusement. And a suitable preparative this was for such manly sports as that of horse-baiting. There might be less inhumanity, perhaps (though the process of teaching was barbarous enough, no doubt), in the curious feats animals were taught to perform, as that of bear-playing, and horses beating a war-point on a tabor. But, happily, we have traces that the Norman-English delighted sometimes in sports more innocent: we can fancy them sitting absorbed in the intellectual game of chess, or enjoying the fresh air, the green grass, the summer sun, on the bowling-green, or bursting with obstreperous laughter by the rustic fireside at the game of bob-apple. The general time of retiring to rest was at sunset in summer, and eight or nine in winter, when the *couvre feu*, cover fire, or curfew-bell, was rung. The Conqueror, though he did not (as supposed) originate this custom, no doubt employed it as a means of repressing the spirit of the English. In some remote places the curfew still 'tolls the knell of parting day,' and from towers to which, like that of Barking, it has lent its name. The dead among the common people were buried without coffins, although the Conqueror was laid in a shallow grave lined with masonry. When stone

coffins were used by the wealthy classes, they were let into the ground no lower than their depth. Gradually they came to be placed entirely above the ground, and then the sides were sculptured. The costume of the Normans of both sexes was chiefly Oriental, borrowed from the Turks of this period. The most remarkable exception was the singular knotted sleeve of the ladies."

No event of any importance as regards this county happened until the times of the Crusades—when many of our Somersetshire nobles with their followers (in common with the country at large) started upon those extraordinary expeditions, in which military prowess, religious enthusiasm, and mediæval chivalry were so strangely combined. Some of our neighbouring churches contain tombs of these warriors and of Crusaders of later times.

In the reign of John this county suffered, with other parts of England, from the Papal Bull. By it a stop was put to Divine service; the churches were closed, and the people experienced all the inconveniences of an uncivilised country. Somersetshire sent barons, with those of other countries, who compelled the weak-minded King John to come to terms, and to grant to the English nation the privileges of Magna Charta.

Prosperity dawned upon the West during the long and happy reigns of the Edwards, when the spirit of improvement began to show itself, and the architecture of the country, and especially of this county, was so beautifully pure and chaste.

It was about this time the people of this country were grieved with the infliction of the poll-tax; and although we are not informed that any riots took place in this immediate neighbourhood, we know that nearly the whole of the Southern counties joined the insurgents. In a few of our oldest churches are memorials of some of those warriors who made England feared by their noble exploits at Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt.

Nor was Somersetshire behind in finding partizans of those civil strifes which for so many years devastated the country. Somersetshire heroes followed their native Barons, and took part in the wars of the Red and White Roses. It is well known that this county generally sided with the Lancasterian party, and several of the records of our old county families will show that many of the brave sons of the West paid extreme penalties for doing so.

We must not omit mentioning that it was just about the end of the 13th century, or the beginning of the 14th, that so many of our beautiful country churches and towers were erected—edifices of which the county may justly be proud, and which have given quite a feature and a character to Somersetshire.

We would remind the reader that although Somersetshire is now regarded as a purely agricultural district, yet in the days of yore, before the discovery of the steam-engine and the beds of coal in the North of England, this county was the seat of a very large and flourishing trade, especially in all descriptions of woollen goods. The towns of the West were busy hives of commerce; the houses of the cottagers resounded with the noise of the shuttle and distaff, and the manufactures of Taunton and the neighbouring towns had a world-wide fame.

The implements of husbandry, at that period, were of the same kind as those that are employed at present, though all of them, no doubt, much less perfect in their construction.

The various operations of husbandry—as manuring, ploughing, sowing, harrowing, reaping, thrashing, winnowing, &c.—are incidentally mentioned by the writers of that period; but it is impossible to collect from them a distinct account of the manner in which these operations were performed.

Agriculture in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it appears, was carried on with vigour. Sir John Fortescue, in a work in praise of the English laws, mentions the progress that had been made in planting hedges and hedge-row trees before the end of the fourteenth century. Judge Fortescue wrote his *Legum Angliæ* in the fifteenth century, but it was not published till the reign of Henry VIII. In the law-book called *Fleta* (supposed to have been written by some lawyers, prisoners in the Fleet, in 1340) very particular directions are given as to the various operations of husbandry. This work, as well as others of the kind, is written in Latin; and even the farming accounts were in those days kept in that language, as they still are in the greater part of Hungary.

During the principal part of the fifteenth century England

was engaged in civil wars, and agriculture, as well as other arts, declined. The labourers, called from the plough by royal proclamation, or the mandates of their lords, perished in battle, by accident or fatigue, in immense numbers. Labour rose in price, notwithstanding various laws for its limitation, and this at last produced a memorable revolution in the state of agriculture, which made a mighty noise for many years. The prelates, barons, and other great proprietors of land, kept extensive tracts around their castles, which were called their demesne lands, in their own immediate possession, and cultivated them by their villans, and by hired servants, under the direction of their bailiffs. But these great landholders having often led their followers into the fields of war, their numbers were gradually diminished, and hired servants could not be procured on reasonable terms. This obliged the prelates, lords and gentlemen to enclose the lands around their castles, and to convert them into pasture grounds. This practice of enclosing became very general in England about the middle of this period, and occasioned prodigious clamours from those who mistook the effect of depopulation for its cause.


The habit of enclosing lands and converting them to pasture continued after the cause had ceased, and an act was passed to stop its progress in the beginning of the reign of Henry VII. The dearths of this period furnish another proof of the low state of agriculture. Wheat in 1437 and 1438 rose from 4s. or 4s. 6d.—the ordinary price per quarter—to £1 6s. 8d.—equivalent to £13s. 8d. of our money. Stow observes that, in these extremities, the common people endeavoured to preserve their wretched lives by drying the roots of herbs and converting them into a kind of bread. Land in those days was sold at ten years' purchase, so great was the insecurity of possession.





## West Somerset:

### State of the People in the so-called "Good Old Times."

T was found that the people were wicked enough to still want to live on. In the twelfth year of Richard II. the legislature passed an act which was meant to keep them in check. The act recited that "servants and labourers will not, nor by a long season would serve and labour without outrageous and excessive hire, and much more than hath been given to such servants and labourers in any time past; so that, for the dearness of the said servants and labourers, the husbandmen and land-tenants cannot pay their rents, nor hardly live upon their lands." It then went on to fix the wages of agricultural labourers more particularly than had yet been done. A bailiff in husbandry was to have 13s. 4d. a year, "and his clothing once by year at most;" a master-hind, a carter, or a shepherd was to have 10s. a year; an oxherd, 6s. 8d.; a swineherd, 6s.; and a woman-labourer, 6s. a year. The former Statute of Labourers was confirmed, and the new act added these restrictions—that no labourer or servant should quit the place where he worked without having a passport declaring his history and containing a permit for him to go. If he were found without such a document, he was to be put in the stocks. It was also provided, in the spirit of the worst predial slavery, that children who had served in husbandry till they were twelve years of age should "from thenceforth abide at the same labour, without being put to any trade or handicraft."

Under these laws agricultural labourers existed more or less miserably for a long term of years. Workmen in town, artificers and their labourers, were still nominally

subject to the statute of Edward III., though in practice the provisions of that law were modified by the exigences of the demand for skilled labour and the comparatively small amount of the supply. Corporations and guilds, especially in chartered towns, had also their rules and bye-laws, which tended to diminish as against trade and manufacturers the severity of the statute, though in the main their efforts were directed rather to secure profit to the masters than fair remuneration to the men. Still, the members of guilds finding it to be their interest to employ the very best kind of labour, and finding also that this kind of labour was not to be had—or, at all events, to be exerted—without a proportionate wage, managed to attain their object without going directly counter to the law of the land. They made presents, they stipulated that certain perquisites should be given, they found some means or other of remedying, in their own interest, the injustice of the law. As against artificers generally, however, in common with agricultural labourers, the law of Edward III. was binding, and continued in force till the fifth year of Elizabeth. An act was certainly passed in the eleventh year of Henry VII., which fixed "the yearly wages of servants in husbandry, and the several wages of artificers, day-labourers, and ship-wrights, and the several times limited for their work, meals, and sleep;" but it was repealed in the following year; and with the exception of a statute of Henry VIII., which aimed at fixing the price of all kinds of labour, and the hours at which an artificer or labourer should "begin and end his work, and what time he shall have for his meals and sleep," there was no

legislation backed up by penalties, and systematically enforced, till the fifth year of Elizabeth.

Among the possessors of land in this county of most note in the thirteenth century we find names which are distinguished at the present day:—Berkeley, Poulet, Malet, Neville, Clifton, Hastings, Cogan, Popham, Russell, Warre, Portman and Luttrell.

The names of those persons who have served this county in Parliament from A.D. 1298, and those of the sheriffs from the year 1154, may be found in the Introduction of Collinson's History of Somerset.

The time was now at hand when the English became a nation of some importance. In the 14th century great changes took place. The national character was then formed—that well-known world-wide character which Englishmen have never lost. It was then that the law became respected; that the language of the people was vastly improved; that colleges were founded; that trade was encouraged and protected; and last, but not least, then appeared the first dawn of that noble literature, the most splendid and the most durable of the many glories of England.

But peace, plenty and improvement were not destined to continue unchecked; conspiracies and war loomed in the distance, and England was again to be plunged into trouble.

Somersetshire did not escape. Our lovely vale and even our flourishing town were destined to experience the noise and tumult of war. Perkin Warbeck aspired to the Crown, and he resolved to try the affections of the men of the West. He no sooner made his appearance among them at Bodmin, in Cornwall, than the populace, to the number of three thousand, flocked to his standard.

Elated with this appearance of success, he took on him, for the first time, the title of Richard the Fourth, King of England, and led his adherents to the gates of Exeter. But finding the inhabitants obstinate in refusing to admit him, and, being unprovided with artillery to force an entrance, he broke up the siege of Exeter and retired to Taunton Castle. King Henry VII. set out to meet him with all speed at the head of some chosen troops of young gentry and noblemen. Perkin's followers by this time amounted to 7,000 men, and appeared ready to defend his cause; but his heart failed him upon being informed that the king was coming down so strongly to oppose him; and he fled privately and took sanctuary in the monastery of Beaulieu, in the New Forest. His wretched adherents, left to the King's mercy, found him still willing to pardon, and (except a few of the ringleaders) none were treated with capital severity.

At the same time some persons were employed to arrange with Perkin, and to persuade him, under promise of a pardon, to deliver himself up and confess the circumstances of his imposture. After attempting once or twice to escape from custody, he was hanged at Tyburn, and several of his adherents suffered the same ignominious death.

In the animated language of Goldsmith we are told that Henry's greatest efforts were directed to promote trade and commerce among his people, which introduced a spirit of liberty, and disengaged them from all dependence, except upon the laws and the king. Before this great era all our towns owed their origin to some strong castle in the neighbourhood, where a powerful lord generally resided.

These were at once fortresses for protection and prisons for all sorts of criminals. In this castle there was usually a garrison, armed and provided, depending entirely on the nobleman's support and assistance.

To these seats of protection, artificers, victuallers, and shop-keepers naturally resorted, and settled on some adjacent spot, to furnish the lord and his attendants with all the necessaries they might require.

The farmers also, and the husbandmen in the neighbourhood, built their houses there, to be protected against the numerous gangs of robbers that hid themselves in the woods by day and infested the open country by night. Henry endeavoured to bring the towns from such a neighbourhood, by inviting the inhabitants to more commercial situations.

The king further attempted to teach them frugality and a just payment of debts, by his own example, and never once omitted the rights of the merchant in all his treaties with foreign princes.

Henry having thus seen England in a great measure civilized by his endeavours, the people paying taxes without constraint, the nobles confessing subordination, the laws alone inflicting punishment, the towns beginning to live independent of the powerful, commerce every day increasing, the spirit of faction extinguished, and foreigners, either fearing England or seeking its alliance, began to see the approach of his end, and died of the gout, having reigned twenty-three years in great power and prosperity.

Since the time of Alfred, England had not seen such another reign. Under Henry the English nation was powerful and happy, and a greater change was wrought in the manners of the people than it was possible to suppose could be effected in so short a period.

But if such beneficial changes took place in this reign, a far greater, and perhaps more important, change took

place in the following. The alterations and progress we have referred to were political, social and commercial. The Reformation worked wonders for this country, *ecclesiastically* and religiously.

Among the names of the lords, knights, esquires, and gentlemen within the county of Somerset, resident in the time of Henry VII., we observe those of Luttrell, Speke,

Trevilyan, Bluet, Malet, Warre, Cogan, Marshall, Walsh, Newton, Popham and Hamlyn.

As we have observed before, it is beyond our intention to attempt a description of the history of the nation, but merely to narrate such events as particularly affected this county.

## Somersetshire Scenery :

### OUR NATIVE HILLS.



HE dales between,  
From woodland screen,  
The modest towers are peeping ;  
And hamlets fair  
Lay here and there,  
All up the hill-sides creeping.

On this side, Wales,  
Her heights and vales  
In landscape soft is lending ;  
On this upsprung,  
The clouds among,  
The Dartmoor peaks ascending.

And nearer still,  
Lie Brendon Hill,  
And Croydon range, his brother ;  
This clear and bare,  
With forehead fair,  
With heath-capt brow the other.

Here Exmoor wide  
May be descried,  
His dingy Downs outspreading ;  
With many a steed,  
Of mountain breed,  
The countless acres treading.


No beacon bright  
Gleams now at night,  
Its war behest displaying ;  
Yet, as of yore,  
Are hearthstones four,  
And furnaces decaying.

The warrior's dust,  
In sacred trust,  
The craggy crest defendeth ;  
And shrill sea mew,  
And wild curlew,  
Her note for requiem lendeth.

*Stephenson.*

## West Somerset:

### The Reformation to the Commonwealth.



READERS of ancient histories, especially those of Greece and Rome, must have observed that the greater part of their time is occupied with descriptions of wars, seditions, conspiracies, &c., and that they are really very little informed respecting the habits and every-day life of the people. The same remark will in a less degree apply to the histories of our own country. There is, however, one exception to this rule. We allude to the writings of Lord Macaulay. In his most interesting history, his readers are introduced into the general ordinary habits of society, and information is afforded on every subject of interest, including trade, agriculture, dress, politics, &c., &c. We shall, therefore, take the liberty of making free with his lordship's writings, and at once give our readers his description of England and her sons during the time of that great change which took place in the 16th century, and which is known by the name of the Reformation.

While the government of the Tudors was in its highest vigour, an event took place which has coloured the destinies of all Christian nations, and in an especial manner the destinies of England. Twice during the middle ages the mind of Europe had risen up against the domination of Rome.

Corrupt as the Church of Rome was, there is reason to believe that, if that Church had been overthrown in the twelfth or even in the fourteenth century, the vacant space would have been occupied by some system more corrupt still. There was then, through the greater part of Europe, very little knowledge; and that little was confined to the clergy. Not one man in five hundred could have spelled

his way through a psalm. Books were few and costly. The art of printing was unknown. Copies of the Bible, inferior in beauty and clearness to those which every cottager may now command, sold for prices which many priests could not afford to give. It was obviously impossible that the laity should search the Scriptures for themselves. It was probable, therefore, that as soon as they had put off one spiritual yoke, they would have put on another, and that the power lately exercised by the clergy of the Church of Rome would have passed to a far worse class of teachers. The sixteenth century was comparatively a time of light. Yet even in the sixteenth century a considerable number of those who quitted the old religion followed the first confident and plausible guide who offered himself, and were soon led into errors far more serious than those which they had renounced. The priests, with all their faults, were by far the wisest portion of society. But a change took place. Knowledge gradually spread among laymen. At the commencement of the sixteenth century many of them were in every intellectual attainment fully equal to the most enlightened of their spiritual pastors.

The struggle between the old and new theology in our country was long, and the event sometimes seemed doubtful. There were two extreme parties, prepared to act with violence or to suffer with stubborn resolution. Between them lay, during a considerable time, a middle party, which blended, very illogically, but by no means unnaturally, lessons learned in the nursery with the sermons of the modern evangelists, and, while clinging with fondness to old observances, yet detested abuses with which those observances were closely connected. Men in such a

frame of mind were willing to obey, almost with thankfulness, the dictation of an able ruler who spared them the trouble of judging for themselves, and, raising a firm and commanding voice above the uproar of controversy, told them how to worship and what to believe. It is not strange, therefore, that the Tudors should have been able to exercise a great influence on ecclesiastical affairs; nor is it strange that their influence should, for the most part, have been exercised with a view to their own interest.

Henry the Eighth attempted to constitute an Anglican Church differing from the Roman Catholic Church on the point of supremacy, and on that point alone. His success in this attempt was extraordinary. But Henry's system died with him.

But, as the government needed the support of the Protestants, so the Protestants needed the protection of the government. Much was therefore given up on both sides: an union was effected; and the fruit of that union was the Church of England.

The man who took the chief part in settling the conditions of the alliance which produced the Anglican Church was Archbishop Cranmer."

[The reader will probably remember that Cranmer, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and Wolsey, Henry's great minister, were both connected with this neighbourhood. The former was Archdeacon of Taunton in 1522. The latter often resided at Milverton, where he had a house.]

When Henry died, therefore, the Primate and his suffragans took out fresh commissions, empowering them to ordain and to govern the Church till the new sovereign should think fit to order otherwise.

In 1549, 3 Edward VI., a proclamation was issued by the King, with the advice of his uncle, Edward, Duke of Somerset, Lord Protector, and the rest of his Privy Council, to restrain certain nobles and gentry from enclosing such commons and wastes as lay open, and converting them into pastures and parks, for their own benefit and to the great injury of the poor cottagers, who depastured their cows and geese upon them, ordering all such as had been thus enclosed to be thrown down by a certain day, under heavy penalties. The good intentions of this order were disregarded, and its positive injunctions not complied with; which gave rise to great discontent among the cottagers, who at length assembled in a tumultuous manner, particularly in the Eastern part of this county. They broke down the inclosures of the parks of Sir William Herbert and Lord Stourton. A royal commission was issued to Sir William Herbert to raise a body of men to quell the disturbance; but it gave rise to the outrageous

and cruel proceedings of Lord Stourton towards the family of Hartgill, of Kilmington, near Stourhead, which brought that nobleman to an ignominious end.

"In the days of Edward the Sixth the scruples of party had repeatedly thrown great difficulties in the way of the government. When Elizabeth came to the throne, those difficulties were much increased. Violence naturally engenders violence. The spirit of Protestantism was therefore far fiercer and more intolerant after the cruelties of Mary than before them. Many persons who were warmly attached to the new opinions had, during the evil days, taken refuge in Switzerland and Germany. They had been hospitably received by their brethren in the faith, had sat at the feet of the great doctors of Strasburg, Zurich, and Geneva, and had been, during some years, accustomed to a more simple worship, and to a more democratical form of church government, than England had yet seen. These men returned to their country, convinced that the reform which had been effected under King Edward had been far less searching and extensive than the interests of pure religion required. But it was in vain that they attempted to obtain any concession from Elizabeth. Indeed her system, wherever it differed from her brother's, seemed to them to differ for the worst. They were little disposed to submit, in matters of faith, to any human authority. They had recently, in reliance on their own interpretation of Scripture, risen up against a Church strong in immemorial antiquity and catholic consent.

It long seemed probable that Englishmen would have to fight desperately on English ground for their religion and independence. Nor were they ever for a moment free from apprehensions of some great treason at home. For in that age it had become a point of conscience and of honour with many men of generous natures to sacrifice their country to their religion. A succession of dark plots formed by Roman Catholics against the life of the Queen and the existence of the nation, kept society in constant alarm. Whatever might be the faults of Elizabeth, it was plain that, to speak humanly, the fate of the realm and of all reformed Churches was staked on the security of her person and on the success of her administration. To strengthen her hands was, therefore, the first duty of a patriot and a Protestant; and that duty was well performed.

The Queen took upon herself to grant patents of monopoly by scores. There was scarcely a family in the realm which did not feel itself aggrieved by the oppression and extortion which this abuse naturally caused. Iron, oil, vinegar, coal, saltpetre, lead, starch, yarn, skins, leather, glass, could be bought only at exorbitant prices. The

House of Commons met in an angry and determined mood. It was in vain that a courtly minority blamed the Speaker for suffering the acts of the Queen's Highness to be called in question. The language of the discontented party was high and menacing, and was echoed by the voice of the whole nation. The coach of the chief minister of the crown was surrounded by an indignant populace, who cursed the monopolies, and exclaimed that the prerogative should not be suffered to touch the old liberties of England. There seemed for a moment to be some danger that the long and glorious reign of Elizabeth would have a shameful and disastrous end. She, however, with admirable judgment and temper, declined the contest, put herself at the head of the reforming party, redressed the grievance, thanked the Commons, in touching and dignified language, for their tender care of the general weal, brought back to herself the hearts of the people, and left to her successors a memorable example of the way in which it behoves a ruler to deal with public movements which he has not the means of resisting.

In the year 1603 the great Queen died. That year is, on many accounts, one of the most important epochs in our history. It was then that both Scotland and Ireland became parts of the same empire with England.

In 1633 the people of Somerset took a decided part in the Sabbatarian controversy which agitated the country for a considerable time. The origin of this disturbance was the custom of keeping wakes, with church ales, bid ales, and clerks' ales on the Sunday. This was very properly considered by the gentry as productive of much disorder, and a profanation of the Lord's day. A memorial was presented to the Lord Chief Justice and Baron Denham, Judges of the Lent Assizes in the Western circuit, to make an order to suppress them, which the Lord Chief Justice Popham had done before in the time of Queen Elizabeth. The Judges readily complied with this request, and made an order, commanding the constables to deliver it to the minister of every parish, to publish it three several Sundays before Easter. The Archbishop conceived this an innovation and usurpation, on the part of the Judges, of his jurisdiction, and caused the Chief Justice to revoke it, and soon after came out the King's declaration for the use of sports on the Lord's Day.

The visitation of counties by the King's Stewards and Officers at Arms under the special warrant of the Sovereign, for the purpose of collecting and recording the pedigrees and arms of the nobility and gentry resident therein, is of very ancient date; and the genealogies and arms thus collected are well known by the name of Visitations.

The following is a copy of a citation from the King at Arms to the nobility and gentry of Somerset:—

"SIR,—You are personally to appear before Sir Edward Byshe, Knt., Clarence King at Arms, on Saturday next, being the 14th day of September, 1672, eight o'clock in the morning, at the signe of the Swan, in Bridgwater, and to bring with you such coats of arms and crest as you use and bear; whereof fail not, as you will answer your contempt before the Right Honourable the Earl Marshall of England."

On the day of the accession of James the First England descended from the rank which she had hitherto held, and began to be regarded as a power hardly of the second order. During many years the great British monarchy, under four successive princes of the House of Stuart, was scarcely a more important member of the European system than the little kingdom of Scotland had previously been. This, however, is little to be regretted. Of James the First, as of John, it may be said that, if his administration had been able and splendid, it would probably have been fatal to our country, and that we owe more to his weakness and meanness than to the wisdom and courage of much better sovereigns. He came to the throne at a critical moment. The time was fast approaching when either the King must become absolute, or the Parliament must control the whole executive administration.

The violent Prelatists who were, to a man, zealous for prerogative, and the violent Puritans who were, to a man, zealous for the privileges of Parliament, regarded each other with animosity more intense than that which, in the preceding generation, had existed between Catholics and Protestants.

Just at this conjuncture James died. Charles the First succeeded to the throne. He had received from nature a far better understanding, a far stronger will, and a far keener and firmer temper than his father's. He had inherited his father's political theories, and was much more disposed to carry them into practice. He was, like his father, a zealous Episcopalian.

And now began that hazardous game on which were staked the destinies of the English people. It was played on the side of the House of Commons with keenness, but with admirable dexterity, coolness, and perseverance. Great statesmen who looked far behind them and far before them were at the head of that assembly. They were resolved to place the King in such a situation that he must either conduct the administration in conformity with the wishes of his Parliament, or make outrageous attacks on the most sacred principles of the constitution. They accordingly doled out supplies to him very sparingly. He

found that he must govern either in harmony with the House of Commons, or in defiance of all law. His choice was soon made. He dissolved his first Parliament, and levied taxes by his own authority. He convoked a second Parliament, and found it more intractable than the first. He again resorted to the expedient of dissolution, raised fresh taxes without any show of legal right, and threw the chiefs of the opposition into prison. At the same time a new grievance, which the peculiar feelings and habits of the English nation made insupportably painful, and which seemed to all discerning men to be of fearful augury, excited general discontent and alarm. Companies of soldiers were billeted on the people; and martial law was in some places substituted for the ancient jurisprudence of the realm.

We will now ask our reader's attention while we remind him of some of those occurrences which took place in this reign, and of which this county bore a decided share; and in doing so we propose to follow the account given by Savage.

The design of Charles I. to extend the prerogative beyond the bounds of the Constitution gave rise to a long and bloody contest, which ended in the violent death of the King, and in throwing the nation into a state of anarchy. This design appeared in various arbitrary and oppressive measures.

The King, in different instances, invaded the privileges, and attempted to annul the power, and even the existence, of the Parliament; frequently dissolving it in displeasure, and even governing twelve years without it. He exacted money of his subjects in different illegal ways, particularly under the titles of ship-money and loans. The former was raised by a writ, in form of a law, and directed to every county in England, to provide a ship of war, and send it by such a day to such a place, amply equipped and manned.

Search was made through this neighbourhood and county; and from various places, including the towns of Bridgwater, Wells, Bath, Ilchester, Glastonbury, Ilminster and others, they collected stores of ammunition and arms for, at least, eighteen hundred men; great saddles, one hundred and fifty; light horses, one hundred and fifty; and ten thousand pounds in money. All these articles were conveyed to the castle in Taunton, and lodged there under the custody of the mayor and aldermen, with a sufficient guard. Of Somersetshire was required one ship of six hundred and forty tons, and two hundred and fifty-six men. These writs were accompanied with instructions to the sheriff to levy upon his county, instead of a ship, such a sum of money; from whence

this tax had its denomination. It produced to the King's coffers for some years the annual sum of £200,000.

Another mode of supplying his wants, without the aid of Parliament, which the King pursued, was by letters under his privy seal unto the several counties of England, directed to those who were supposed best able to lend, requiring, by way of loan, certain sums of money. It was not prudent to refuse, or even to delay this modest appeal. One of the sheriffs of London hesitated to forward to the King the names of such persons on whom it was considered suitable to serve these writs. A short time only elapsed before events took place which caused the sheriff to become a marked man. These writs were accompanied with letters, by one of the King's servants, exacting an immediate attention to his Majesty's requisition, under the threat of being summoned before the King in person.

Such measures could not fail to rouse the indignation of a free people. The whole kingdom became the seat of war. Some joined the Parliament, others enlisted under the royal standard, and every county flowed with the blood of fellow citizens.

In 1645 the King had all the county of Somerset in his power except Taunton. That town had been taken by the Parliamentary forces, in August, 1642. About this period Sir Ralph (afterwards Lord) Hopton, a gentleman of great mental and bodily accomplishments, and trained to war in the Low Countries, had rendered the King most important services in the West, where in a few months he raised a formidable army, and fortified no less than forty garrisons.

To check the progress of his influence, and to prevent the dangers threatened by his growing fortunes, Sir William Waller advanced into these parts with a well-furnished army, and the taking possession of Taunton was particularly the object of the direction given to one body of the Parliament's forces. The views of the Parliament in the West were greatly assisted by the conduct of Sir John Horner, Mr. Alexander Popham, and other gentlemen.

Mr. Sanford, the High Sheriff of Somerset, was attached to its interest. The principal gentry of the neighbourhood, the trained bands, the mayor and the principal inhabitants of the town, aided, with horse and foot, the intention of securing this place for the Parliament.

We again follow Macaulay's account:—When the war had lasted a year, the advantage was decidedly with the Royalists. They were victorious, both in the western and in the northern counties. They had wrested Bristol, the second city in the kingdom, from the Parliament. They had won several battles, and had not sustained a single

serious or ignominious defeat. Among the Roundheads adversity had begun to produce dissension and discontent. It was found that the Parliament was kept in alarm, sometimes by plots, sometimes by riots. It was thought necessary to fortify London against the royal army, and to hang some disaffected citizens at their own doors. Several of the most distinguished peers who had hitherto remained at Westminster fled to the Court at Oxford; nor can it be doubted that, if the operations of the Cavaliers had, at this season, been directed by a sagacious and powerful mind, Charles would soon have marched in triumph to Whitehall.

Some of the old Parliamentary leaders had been removed by death, and others had forfeited the public confidence. Pym had been borne, with princely honours, to a grave among the Plantagenets. Hampden had fallen, as became him, while vainly endeavouring, by his heroic example, to inspire his followers with courage to face the fiery cavalry of Rupert. Bedford had been untrue to the cause. Northumberland was known to be lukewarm. Essex and his lieutenants had shown little vigour and ability in the conduct of military operations. At such a conjuncture it was that the Independent party, ardent, resolute, and uncompromising, began to raise its head, both in the camp and in the House of Commons.

The soul of that party was Oliver Cromwell. Bred to peaceful occupations, he had, at more than forty years of age, accepted a commission in the Parliamentary army. No sooner had he become a soldier than he discerned, with the keen glance of genius, what Essex and men like Essex, with all their experience, were unable to perceive. He saw precisely where the strength of the Royalists lay, and by what means alone that strength could be overpowered. He saw that it was necessary to reconstruct the army of the Parliament.

Cromwell showed that in his camp a political organisation and a religious organisation could exist without destroying military organisation. The same men, who,

off duty, were noted as demagogues and field preachers, were distinguished by steadiness, by the spirit of order, and by prompt obedience on watch, on drill, and on the field of battle.

Charles was a most unscrupulous and a most unluckily dissembler. There never was a politician to whom so many frauds and falsehoods were brought home by undeniable evidence. He publicly recognised the Houses at Westminster as a legal Parliament, and at the same time made a private minute in council declaring the recognition null. He publicly disclaimed all thought of calling in foreign aid against his people: he privately solicited aid from France, from Denmark, and from Lorraine. He publicly denied that he employed Papists: at the same time he privately sent to his generals directions to employ every Papist that would serve.

Cromwell had to determine whether he would put to hazard the attachment of his party, the attachment of his army, his own greatness, nay his own life, in an attempt which would probably have been vain, to save a prince whom no engagement could bind. With many struggles and misgivings, and probably not without many prayers, the decision was made. Charles was left to his fate. The military saints resolved that, in defiance of the old laws of the realm, and of the almost universal sentiment of the nation, the King should expiate his crimes with his blood. He for a time expected a death like that of his unhappy predecessors, Edward the Second and Richard the Second.

No court, known to the law, would take on itself the office of judging the fountain of justice. A revolutionary tribunal was created. That tribunal pronounced Charles a tyrant, a traitor, a murderer, and a public enemy; and his head was severed from his shoulders before thousands of spectators, in front of the banqueting hall of his own palace.

Of the double siege of this town and its gallant defence by the celebrated Blake, we shall give further particulars in our account of the History of Taunton.





## West Somerset :

### From the Commonwealth to the Revolution.



THE whole country at this time was so divided, politically, socially, and religiously, that our county could not escape the effect of the great and extraordinary changes which then occurred. In the House of Commons greater alteration in the representation of the people took place than at the Reform in 1832—or under the present change. Small boroughs were disfranchised by wholesale, and the county members increased in number. At this time the noted Robert Blake represented Taunton, and in 1653 he was returned for the county of Somerset.

Under no English Government since the Reformation had there been so little religious persecution; and at the same time justice was well administered to all classes. But Cromwell's stern rule was to cease, and the country to experience for a short time the weak government of his mild son. Soon a reaction in the minds of the people took place, and the children of those men who had executed Charles the First longed again to "have a king to reign over them," but with more limited authority. Charles the Second ascended the throne, but seems to have profited little by the stern lessons of previous times. Punishments were showered upon places and persons, and even the corpses of such as took part in the establishment of the Commonwealth were held up to indignity. Our county and her brave sons were among the sufferers. Troops and trained bands were employed to prevent a repetition of such scenes. Taunton felt the effect of these measures. Its corporation was deprived of their charter, and its walls razed to the ground.

According to Savage's account, the people generally,

and especially in this part of the county, were not well attached to their new monarch, and were disposed to favour any efforts which showed a promise of the secure enjoyment of their religion and liberty. They looked for a deliverer, and when James, the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth (who passed as a natural son of King Charles II.), appeared, he was welcomed.

He was brave, generous, affable, and extremely handsome; constant in his friendships, just to his word, and an utter enemy to oppression and tyranny. He was easy in his nature, and fond of popular applause, which led him insensibly into all his misfortunes; but whatever might be the hidden designs of some persons with whom he was afterwards engaged, his own were noble, and chiefly aimed at the good of his country, though he was mistaken in the means to attain it. But nothing contributed more to direct the views of the nation to him than his firm adherence to the Protestant religion and interest. Of the truth of this there is the best proof in an account of a progress which he made into the counties of Somerset and Devon in the month of August, 1680. The conspicuous part which he afterwards acted in Taunton will justify us in presenting our readers with a few particulars relating to this progress, especially as some of the persons mentioned had great weight and influence in this neighbourhood.

In August, 1680, the Duke of Monmouth went into the country to divert himself, visiting several gentlemen in the West of England, by whom he was received and entertained with a gallantry suitable to the greatness of his birth, and the relation in which he stood with his Majesty; incredible numbers of people flocking from all

the adjacent parts, to see this great champion of the English nation, who had been so successful against the Dutch, French, and Scots. He went first into Wiltshire, and was pleased to honour the worthy 'Squire Thynne with his company for some days. From thence he went to Mr. Speke's, in Somersetshire, in which progress he was caressed with the joyful acclamations of the country people, who came from all parts, twenty miles about, the lanes and hedges being everywhere lined with men, women, and children, who, with incessant shouts, cried, 'God bless king Charles and the Protestant duke.' In some towns and parishes, through which he passed, they strewed the streets and highways, where he was to pass, with herbs and flowers, especially at Ilchester and Petherton, others presenting him with bottles of wine. When he came within ten miles of Mr. Speke's, he was met by two thousand persons on horseback, whose number still increased as they drew nearer to Mr. Speke's; and when they arrived there, they were reputed to be twenty thousand.

The king, from his own partiality to the Romish religion, and to oblige his brother, sent the Duke of Monmouth to France, with an express command to reconcile himself to the Church of Rome. The duke, however, was not to be moved from the Protestant faith, either by the seducing influence of France or the commands of his royal father.

These causes united to form a strong party in favour of the duke of Monmouth, and had his recall taken place it may be apprehended that his influence would have become considerable. But the death of Charles the Second defeated the design, and disappointed the wishes of the people, and the hopes of Monmouth. The Prince of Orange, at whose court he was, to avoid displeasing the Duke of York, who had then ascended the throne, dismissed Monmouth, who retired to Brussels, with an intention to take up his residence at Vienna, or some court in Germany. He was earnestly dissuaded from this design, and urged, instead of wandering about, to set himself to deliver his country, and to raise his party and his friends, who were likely to suffer severely for their adherence to him. A person was sent into England to ascertain the state of the public mind, and whether the people were disposed to encourage an invasion.

Monmouth pawned his jewels to purchase arms, and freight his vessels, which amounted only to three ships; one of thirty-two guns, which carried most of the men, and two others, destined to convey their ammunition. The whole company consisted but of eighty-two persons.

The duke and his company landed at Lyme, on Thurs-

day, the 11th of June, not only without any opposition, but with every expression of joy. As soon as Monmouth came ashore, he called for silence, and invited them to join in returning thanks to God for their preservation at sea.

On the Monday after Monmouth had landed at Lyme he marched to Axminster; and, by this time, his forces amounted to two thousand foot and three hundred horse. After a march of about two miles, they discovered the Duke of Albemarle, with his militia, consisting of four thousand men, who designed to take up his quarters that night in the same town. He had conducted his forces from Exeter, with an intention to lay siege to Lyme. The Duke of Monmouth, on finding that he was so near, endeavoured to attach him to his interest, and wrote him a letter signed 'JAMES REX;' to which the Duke of Albemarle replied, 'that he never had been a rebel, nor ever would be one.' This answer cut off all hopes of an union; and the Duke of Monmouth advanced to the town in good order, lined the hedges, and planted his field-pieces, expecting nothing less than a battle. But the Duke of Albemarle, when he was even within a quarter of a mile of Axminster, reflecting that he was at the head of a militia only, who were not disposed to fight against Monmouth, retreated; and his men supposing that they were pursued, the retreat was not effected without much confusion and disorder. Had Monmouth followed them, he might have taken all their arms, increased his own forces, and have marched, without opposition, to the gates of Exeter. But when it was debated whether to pursue them or not, the duke, cautious of risking the event of a battle in so early a stage, distrusting the skill of forces scarcely disciplined, and solicitous to make up into the country as fast as possible, with the sanguine hope of a growing support, determined against the measure, and proceeded to Taunton, the country all the way filling the air with their acclamations, and praying God to give success to his arms.

On Thursday, June 18th, 1685, Monmouth entered Taunton, where he was proclaimed king. Of his reception, and his assuming the royal prerogative, we shall give full particulars in our history of that town.

The Duke of Monmouth continued at Taunton until Sunday morning, and then marched for Bridgwater, where he was most cordially received. According to Oldmixon, who was a native of Bridgwater, he had now with him six thousand men tolerably well armed, which was a greater number than he ever mustered at one time during the progress of his attempt to obtain the crown. He was proclaimed at the High Cross by Mr. Alexander Popham,

then mayor, and the body corporate, in their formalities. Here his declaration was read, and the inhabitants, emulating each other in the assistance they should render him, sent all kinds of provisions to the troops, who were in a rude sort of camp in the Castle-field, close by the town. These troops consisted of six regiments of foot, distinguished by their colours, which had the appearance of an army. He had then about one thousand cavalry (chiefly mounted on mares and colts from the marsh), and a life-guard of forty young men, well mounted and armed, who maintained themselves at their own charge. From his horse two good troops were selected, one commanded by Captain Hewling, and the other by a gentleman whose name is not mentioned. The duke's quarters were in the castle, where King Charles II. and King James II. at several times had also their quarters.

From Bridgwater he proceeded to Glastonbury, and thence to Wells, where he was again proclaimed king, and his declaration read.

After making a circuit in the centre of the county the duke returned to Bridgwater on the 3rd July.

### Battle of Sedgemoor.

Monmouth resolved to fortify himself at Bridgwater, so as to hold his ground until he should hear from London; but the quickened march of the king's forces precipitated his fate. On Sunday morning, July 5, the royal army, consisting of about four thousand men, under the command of the earl of Feversham and lord Churchill (afterwards the great Duke of Marlborough), marched from Somerton; and the same day about noon, five regiments of foot, consisting of two thousand men, encamped in Sedgemoor, in the parish of Chedzoy, under Weston. Five hundred horse took up their quarters in Weston, and one thousand five hundred militia were posted in Middlezoy and Othery, a mile or so distant from Weston.

About eleven o'clock, the duke's forces marched out of Bridgwater, without beat of drum, and with all possible silence, the soldiers being strictly forbidden to fire so much as a pistol, until they entered the royal camp. Lord Grey commanded the horse, and Colonel Wade the vanguard of the foot. The duke's orders were, that the horse should first advance, and, pushing into the enemy's camp, endeavour to prevent their infantry from coming together; that the cannon should follow the horse, and the foot the cannon, and draw up all in one line, and so finish what the cavalry should have begun, before the king's horse and artillery could be got in order.

About one in the morning Monmouth's troops, having

got over the ditch with some difficulty, fell furiously on the king's forces, took two pieces of cannon, and turned them on Dunbarton's and other troops, which threw the latter into disorder. Whilst this was going on, the alarm reached Weston, where the Earl of Feversham, the commander-in-chief of the king's army, was safe in bed; but on receiving this intelligence he immediately hastened to the field. The two armies were now hotly engaged. Monmouth's began with a volley of shot, and their first fire so confounded their enemies that those who were nearest Weston ran into the town, and those who were in Weston ran to Middlezoy, and through that place, above a mile from the moor; so that, had the duke's horse, or even the two troops he had sent with Captain Hewling to Minehead for cannon, made any opposition to the king's cavalry, the rout had been entire. But the badness of Monmouth's horse, which was commanded by Lord Grey, who could not get them into line, most of them being so undisciplined as not to stand the noise of the musketry and cannon, and these consequently disordering the others, induced his lordship to ride up to the duke, crying, "*All is lost, and it is time for you to shift for yourself.*" At this time Monmouth was charging at the head of his infantry, with his wonted gallantry; and the steadiness with which they fought, says Oldmixon, was very extraordinary and promising. The waggons with the ammunition were now drawing towards the moor; but, meeting with some of Lord Grey's horse scampering off, they told the drivers that the duke's army was routed; upon which the waggons turned about, and the drivers did not stop till they got to Weare and Axbridge, a distance of eighteen miles, where they, or the country people, plundered them of their lading.

About three hundred of the duke's men and four hundred of the king's were killed in the action. Monmouth escaped, and made his way, with a few friends, towards the New Forest in Hampshire, where he hoped to find shelter until he could procure a vessel to take him back to the Continent. After undergoing considerable fatigue, the duke (with but one follower) was found concealed in a common, near Ringwood, in Dorsetshire. He was at once sent to London for trial. He begged earnestly, but unsuccessfully, of the king for his life, but was soon condemned to death. On the scaffold at Tower Hill he was pressed to make a full and particular confession. He died with much calmness.

Such was the end of James, Duke of Monmouth, the darling of the English people. He was brave, sincere, and good-natured, open to flattery, and by that seduced into an enterprise which exceeded his capacity.

After Monmouth's execution, the inhabitants of Taunton contemplated a visit from Judge Jeffreys with no little trepidation, and as it proved, with reason; for, on the Judge's arrival, he declared in his charge that it would not be his fault if he did not depopulate the place—a threat which he did his utmost to carry out. "He made all the West," says old Fox, "an Aceldama, and nothing was to be seen in it but forsaken walls, unlucky jibbets, and ghostly carcases."

### Jeffreys' Bloody Assize.

The Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys, with four other judges, and a body of troops commanded by Col. Kirke, was sent into the West with a special commission to try all who had in any degree countenanced or aided the Duke of Monmouth and his followers. He set out on his cruel errand the latter end of August. He opened his commission at Winchester.

From Winchester Jeffreys proceeded to Salisbury. The prisoners that had been taken up in different parts of the country and thrown into that gaol, with those brought from Winchester, were, by order, removed to Dorchester, at which place the judge arrived on Thursday, September the third.

From Dorchester the chief justice went to Exeter, where two hundred and forty-three persons were in custody for assisting the Duke of Monmouth.

Taunton was the next theatre of his rage and cruelty; where he opened his commission with a charge full of sharp invectives. In this town, and at Wells, were more than five hundred prisoners.

The same expeditious process, the same severe charges to the gentlemen, the same menaces to juries, were used at Wells as at other places. In the whole of his circuit two hundred and sixty-one were executed. At Axbridge, six suffered; at Bath, six; at Bridgwater, nine; at Bruton, three; at Chard, twelve; at Castle Cary, three; at Crewkerne, ten; at Chewton Mendip, two; at Dorchester, thirteen; at Cothelstone, two; at Dunster, three; at Dulverton, three; at Frome, twelve; at Glastonbury, six; at Ilchester, twelve; at Ilminster, twelve; at Keynsham, eleven; at Langport, three; at Lyme, twelve; at Minehead, six; at Milborne Port, two; at Nether Stowey, three; at Pensford, twelve; at Philip's Norton, twelve; at Porlock, two; at Redcliff-hill, Bristol, six; at Shepton Mallet, thirteen; at Somerton, seven; at South Petherton, three; at Stoke Courcey, two; at Stogumber, three; at Taunton, nineteen; at Wincanton, six; at Wellington, three; at Wells, eight; at Wiveliscombe, three; at Wring-

ton, three; and at Yeovil, eight. Thus death in its most terrifying forms was exhibited in every quarter, and the country overflowed with blood.

Numbers condemned to die were afterwards delivered over to certain gentlemen for transportation; as, to Sir Philip Howard, two hundred; to Sir William Booth, two hundred; to Sir William Stapleton, one hundred; to Sir Christopher Musgrave, one hundred; to Jerome Nipho, Esq., one hundred; to Captain John Price, fifty; and besides these, to the Queen's order, one hundred. In all, eight hundred and fifty. About six of these were afterwards pardoned, and others were transported in their stead. A considerable number were continued in gaol; many were fined, and many of those who were pardoned or discharged owed their preservation, not to the equity and mercy, but to the avarice, of their judge. For pardons were not granted according to the innocence, but sold according to the wealth of the suitor, different sums, from ten pounds to fourteen thousand guineas, being the purchase of them.

Of those who escaped execution or transportation, twenty were condemned, but their names omitted in the warrant for execution; fifty-two received sentence, but were kept in gaol till further orders; seventy-five were recommended to his Majesty's mercy; fifty-three obtained pardon by surrendering within four days after the proclamation; thirty-five were fined or whipped.

It is not possible to conceive the misery and desolation which these proceedings spread through the country; which 'with the besom of his cruelties,' this man who, as Bishop Burnet expresseth it, was perpetually drunk, or in a rage, more like a fury than a judge, swept a way before him and depopulated instead of punished. "Young and old were hanged by clusters, as if the chief justice had designed to raise the price of halters; families were extirpated, and on bare suspicion a great number were transported beyond sea, and sold for slaves, and the purchase money given away to Papists." England never saw such scenes of violence, rage, and cruelty, under the form of law.

The evil consequences of the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth did not terminate with the severities of Col. Kirke in his military capacity, or of Jeffreys in his judicial office; but were deeply felt in the measures which the king afterwards pursued, who now thought himself at liberty to act without control.

In prosecution of this design, James arrogated to himself a power to dispense with the laws. The doctrine advanced in the courts of justice by his authority was, that his declaration ought to be obeyed.

But no measure of king James gave so great an alarm as the imprisonment and trial of the seven bishops who refused to read his second declaration for liberty of conscience.

[It will be remembered that Ken, the good and venerable bishop of this diocese, was one of the seven.]

If James II. had gone on without control, words would not easily be able to express the miseries into which we should have fallen. But the Revolution disarmed despotism, and put Popery to flight. In religion it gave toleration, to our political constitution it secured freedom.

It assigned to the prerogative of the crown its limits, and it defined the rights of the people. It put the sceptre into the hand of the Prince of Orange, as a free gift of the nation, and it bound him by the most sacred ties to hold it as a trust.

It was an event which diffused joy and gladness through the kingdom, and called forth the warmest expressions of gratitude to Providence.

It was one of those events which tended to establish to the country the glorious civil and religious liberty, the envy of other and less blessed nations.



# West Somerset,

## At the Time of the Revolution.



THE great cause which produced the National dissatisfaction, the civil wars, and finally the Revolution, was undoubtedly the attempt of the Stuarts to govern according to their own will and judgment, instead of by the established law of the land. But the final cause which actually drove James II. from his throne was his conduct towards the Seven Bishops. At no time was Episcopacy so popular as in this reign. It has been before stated that the Bishop of this diocese, the exemplary Ken, was one of the seven. He was a man of great probity, judgment and piety, and his memory well deserves the honour lately done to it by the erection of a marble bust in the Shire Hall, Taunton, in connection with those of the great Locke, the famous Pym, the gallant Blake, and other Somersetshire Worthies who flourished about that time.

The language of Ken in his address to the King is worthy of record. "Sire," he earnestly and manfully said, "We have two duties to perform—our duty to God and our duty to your Majesty. We honour you, but we fear God."

Trelawney, Bishop of Bristol, also had the honour of being of the seven. Probably from this cause it was that so much excitement was manifested on this subject in the West of England. Bristol, at this time, was the second city of the kingdom, and next to London joined with more enthusiasm in the popular joy.

The peace of the country having been restored by the great event known as the Glorious Revolution, we propose to review the general state of this county and the habits of its people at this time; and in doing so shall follow the interesting account given by Macaulay.

### Resources of the Country.

The fact that the sum raised in England by taxation has, in a time not exceeding two long lives, been multiplied fortyfold, is strange, and may at first sight seem appalling. But those who are alarmed by the increase of the public burdens may perhaps be reassured when they have considered the increase of the public resources. In the year 1685 the value of the produce of the soil far exceeded the value of all the other fruits of human industry.

### Agriculture.

Yet agriculture was in what would now be considered as a very rude and imperfect state. The arable land and pasture land were not supposed by the best political arithmeticians of that age to amount to much more than half the area of the kingdom. The remainder was believed to consist of moor, forest, and fen. These computations are strongly confirmed by the road books and maps of the seventeenth century. From those books and maps it is clear that many routes which now pass through an endless succession of orchards, cornfields, hayfields, and beanfields, then ran through nothing but heath, swamp, and warren. In the drawings of English landscapes made in that age for the Grand Duke Cosmo, scarce a hedgerow is to be seen, and numerous tracts, now rich with cultivation, appear as bare as Salisbury Plain.

### Wild Animals.

Deer, as free as in an American forest, wandered there by thousands. It is to be remarked, that wild animals of large size were then far more numerous than at present.

The last wild boars, indeed, which had been preserved for the royal diversion, and had been allowed to ravage the cultivated land with their tusks, had been slaughtered by the exasperated rustics during the license of the civil war. But many breeds now extinct or rare, both of quadrupeds and birds, were still common. The fox, whose life is now, in many counties, held almost as sacred as that of a human being, was then considered as a mere nuisance. Oliver Saint John told the Long Parliament that Strafford was to be regarded, not as a stag or a hare, to whom some law was to be given, but as a fox, who was to be snared by any means, and knocked on the head without pity. This illustration would be by no means a happy one, if addressed to country gentlemen of our time: but in Saint John's days there were not seldom great massacres of foxes to which the peasantry thronged with all the dogs that could be mustered: traps were set: nets were spread: no quarter was given; and to shoot a female with cub was considered as a feat which merited the warmest gratitude of the neighbourhood. The wild bull with his white mane was still to be found wandering in a few of the southern forests. The badger made his dark and tortuous hole on the side of every hill where the copse-wood grew thick. The wild cats were frequently heard by night wailing. Fen eagles, measuring more than nine feet between the extremities of the wings, preyed on fish along the coast. Some of these races the progress of cultivation has extirpated. Of others the numbers are so much diminished that men crowd to gaze at a specimen as at a Bengal tiger or a Polar bear.

### The Land and its Produce.

The progress of this great change can nowhere be more clearly traced than in the Statute Book. The number of enclosure acts passed since King George the Second came to the throne exceeds four thousand. The area enclosed under the authority of those acts exceeds, on a moderate calculation, ten thousand square miles. How many square miles, which were formerly uncultivated or ill cultivated, have, during the same period, been fenced and carefully tilled by the proprietors, without any application to the legislature, can only be conjectured. But it seems highly probable that a fourth part of England has been, in the course of little more than a century, turned from a wilderness into a garden.

Even in those parts of the kingdom which at the close of the reign of Charles the Second were the best cultivated, the farming, though greatly improved since the civil war, was not such as would now be thought skilful. To this day no effectual steps have been taken by public authority

for the purpose of obtaining accurate accounts of the produce of the English soil. The historian must therefore follow, with some misgivings, the guidance of those writers on statistics whose reputation for diligence and fidelity stands highest. At present an average crop of wheat, rye, barley, oats and beans, is supposed considerably to exceed thirty millions of quarters. The crop of wheat would be thought wretched if it did not exceed twelve millions of quarters. According to the computation made in the year 1696 by Gregory King, the whole quantity of wheat, rye, barley, oats and beans then annually grown in the kingdom, was somewhat less than ten millions of quarters. The wheat, which was then cultivated only on the strongest clay, and consumed only by those who were in easy circumstances, he estimated at less than two millions of quarters. Charles Davenant, an acute and well-informed though most unprincipled and rancorous politician, differed from King as to some of the items of the account, but came to nearly the same general conclusions.

The rotation of crops was very imperfectly understood. It was known, indeed, that some vegetables lately introduced into our island, particularly the turnip, afforded excellent nutriment in winter to sheep and oxen: but it was not yet the practice to feed cattle in this manner. It was therefore by no means easy to keep them alive during the season when the grass is scanty. They were killed and salted in great numbers at the beginning of the cold weather; and, during several months, even the gentry tasted scarcely any fresh animal food, except game and river fish, which were consequently much more important articles in housekeeping than at present.

The sheep and the ox at that time were diminutive when compared with the sheep and oxen which are now driven to our markets.

### Horses.

Our native horses, though serviceable, were held in small esteem, and fetched low prices. They were valued, one with another, by the ablest of those who computed the national wealth, at not more than fifty shillings each. Foreign breeds were greatly preferred. Spanish jennets were regarded as the finest chargers, and were imported for purposes of pageantry and war. The coaches of the aristocracy were drawn by grey Flemish mares, which trotted, as it was thought, with a peculiar grace, and endured better than any cattle reared in our island the work of dragging a ponderous equipage over the rugged pavement. Neither the modern dray horse nor the modern race horse was then known. At a much later

period the ancestors of the gigantic quadrupeds, which all foreigners now class among the chief wonders of London, were brought from the marshes of Walcheren; the ancestors of Childers and Eclipse from the sands of Arabia. Already, however, there was among our nobility and gentry a passion for the amusements of the turf. The importance of improving our studs by an infusion of new blood was strongly felt; and with this view a considerable number of barbs had lately been brought into the country. Two men whose authority on such subjects was held in great esteem, the Duke of Newcastle and Sir John Fenwick, pronounced that the meanest hack ever imported from Tangier would produce a finer progeny than could be expected from the best sire of our native breed. They would not readily have believed that a time would come when the princes and nobles of neighbouring lands would be as eager to obtain horses from England as ever the English had been to obtain horses from Barbary.

### The Value of Land.

While these great changes have been in progress, the rent of land has, as might be expected, been almost constantly rising. In some districts it has multiplied more than tenfold. In some it has not more than doubled. It has probably, on the average, quadrupled.

Of the rent, a large proportion was divided among the country gentlemen, a class of persons whose position and character it is most important that we should clearly understand; for by their influence and by their passions the fate of the nation was, at several important conjunctures, determined.

### The Country Gentlemen.

We should be much mistaken if we pictured to ourselves the squires of the seventeenth century as men bearing a close resemblance to their descendants, the county members and chairmen of quarter sessions with whom we are familiar. The modern country gentleman generally receives a liberal education, passes from a distinguished school to a distinguished college, and has ample opportunity to become an excellent scholar. He has generally seen something of foreign countries. A considerable part of his life has generally been passed in the capital; and the refinements of the capital follow him into the country. There is perhaps no class of dwellings so pleasing as the rural seats of the English gentry. In the parks and pleasure grounds, Nature, dressed, yet not disguised, by Art, wears her most alluring form. In the buildings, good sense and good taste combine to produce a happy union of the comfortable and the graceful. The pictures, the musical instruments,

the library, would in any other country be considered as proving the owner to be an eminently polished and accomplished man. A country gentleman who witnessed the Revolution was probably in receipt of about a fourth part of the rent which his acres now yield to his posterity. He was, therefore, as compared with his posterity, a poor man, and was generally under the necessity of residing, with little interruption, on his estate. To travel on the Continent, to maintain an establishment in London, or even to visit London frequently, were pleasures in which only the great proprietors could indulge. It may be confidently affirmed that of the squires whose names were then in the Commissions of Peace and Lieutenancy not one in twenty went to town once in five years, or had ever in his life wandered so far as Paris. Many lords of manors had received an education differing little from that of their menial servants. The heir of an estate often passed his boyhood and youth at the seat of his family with no better tutors than grooms and gamekeepers, and scarce attained learning enough to sign his name to a *Mittimus*. If he went to school and to college, he generally returned before he was twenty to the seclusion of the old hall, and there, unless his mind were very happily constituted by nature, soon forgot his academical pursuits in rural business and pleasures. His chief serious employment was the care of his property. He examined samples of grain, handled pigs, and, on market days, made bargains over a tankard with drovers and hop merchants. His chief pleasures were commonly derived from field sports and from an unrefined sensuality. His language and pronunciation were such as we should now expect to hear only from the most ignorant clowns. His oaths, coarse jests, and scurrilous terms of abuse, were uttered with the broadest accent of his province. It was easy to discern, from the first words which he spoke, whether he came from Somersetshire or Yorkshire. He troubled himself little about decorating his abode, and, if he attempted decoration, seldom produced anything but deformity. The litter of a farmyard gathered under the windows of his bedchamber, and the cabbages and gooseberry bushes grew close to his hall door. His table was loaded with coarse plenty; and guests were cordially welcomed to it. But, as the habit of drinking to excess was general in the class to which he belonged, and as his fortune did not enable him to intoxicate large assemblies daily with claret or canary, strong beer was the ordinary beverage. The quantity of beer consumed in those days was indeed enormous. For beer then was to the middle and lower classes, not only all that beer now is, but all that wine, tea and ardent spirits now are. It was only at



great houses, or on great occasions, that foreign drink was placed on the board. The ladies of the house, whose business it had commonly been to cook the repast, retired as soon as the dishes had been devoured, and left the gentlemen to their ale and tobacco. The coarse jollity of the afternoon was often prolonged till the revellers were laid under the table.

It was very seldom that the country gentleman caught glimpses of the great world; and what he saw of it tended rather to confuse than to enlighten his understanding. His opinions respecting religion, government, foreign countries and former times, having been derived, not from study, from observation, or from conversation with enlightened companions, but from such traditions as were current in his own small circle, were the opinions of a child. He adhered to them, however, with the obstinacy which is generally found in ignorant men accustomed to be fed with flattery. His animosities were numerous and bitter. He hated Frenchmen and Italians, Scotchmen and Irishmen, Papists and Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, Quakers and Jews. Towards London and Londoners he felt an aversion which more than once produced important political effects. His wife and daughter were in tastes and acquirements below a housekeeper or a stillroom maid of the present day. They stitched and spun, brewed gooseberry wine, cured marigolds, and made the crust for the venison pasty.

From this description it might be supposed that the English esquire of the seventeenth century did not materially differ from a rustic miller or alehouse keeper of our time. There are, however, some important parts of his character still to be noted, which will greatly modify this estimate. Unlettered as he was and unpolished, he was still in some most important points a gentleman. He was a member of a proud and powerful aristocracy, and was distinguished by many both of the good and of the bad qualities which belong to aristocrats. His family pride was beyond that of a Talbot or a Howard. He knew the genealogies and coats of arms of all his neighbours, and could tell which of them had assumed supporters without any right, and which of them were so unfortunate as to be great grandsons of aldermen. He was a magistrate, and, as such, administered gratuitously to those who dwelt around him a rude patriarchal justice, which, in spite of innumerable blunders and of occasional acts of tyranny, was yet better than no justice at all. He was an officer of the trainbands; and his military dignity, though it might move the mirth of gallants who had served a campaign in Flanders, raised his character in his own eyes and in the eyes of his neighbours. Nor indeed was his soldiery

justly a subject of derision. There were elderly gentlemen who had seen service which was no child's play. One had been knighted by Charles the First, after the battle of Edgehill. Another still wore a patch over the scar which he had received at Naseby. A third had defended his old house till Fairfax had blown in the door with a petard. The presence of these old cavaliers, with their old swords and holsters, and with their old stories about Goring and Monmouth, gave to the musters of militia an earnest and warlike aspect which would otherwise have been wanting. Even those country gentlemen who were too young to have themselves exchanged blows with the cuirassiers of the Parliament had, from childhood, been surrounded by the traces of recent war, and fed with stories of the martial exploits of their fathers and uncles. Thus the character of the English esquire of the seventeenth century was compounded of two elements which we seldom or never find united. His ignorance and uncouthness, his low tastes and gross phrases, would, in our time, be considered as indicating a nature and a breeding thoroughly plebeian. Yet he was essentially a patrician, and had, in large measure, both the virtues and the vices which flourish among men set from their birth in high place, and used to respect themselves and to be respected by others. It is not easy for a generation accustomed to find chivalrous sentiments only in company with liberal studies and polished manners to image to itself a man with the deportment, the vocabulary, and the accent of a carter, yet punctilious on matters of genealogy and precedence, and ready to risk his life rather than see a stain cast on the honour of his house. It is, however, only by thus joining together things seldom or never found together in our own experience, that we can form a just idea of that rustic aristocracy which constituted the main strength of the armies of Charles the First, and which long supported, with a strange fidelity, the interests of his descendants.

The gross, uneducated, untravelled country gentleman was commonly a Tory; but, though devotedly attached to hereditary monarchy, he had no partiality for courtiers and ministers. He thought, not without reason, that Whitehall was filled with the most corrupt of mankind, and that of the great sums which the House of Commons had voted to the crown since the Restoration, part had been embezzled by cunning politicians, and part squandered on buffoons and foreign courtesans. His stout English heart swelled with indignation at the thought that the government of his country should be subject to French dictation. Being himself generally an old Cavalier, or the son of an old Cavalier, he reflected with bitter resentment on the ingratitude with which the Stuarts had requited their best

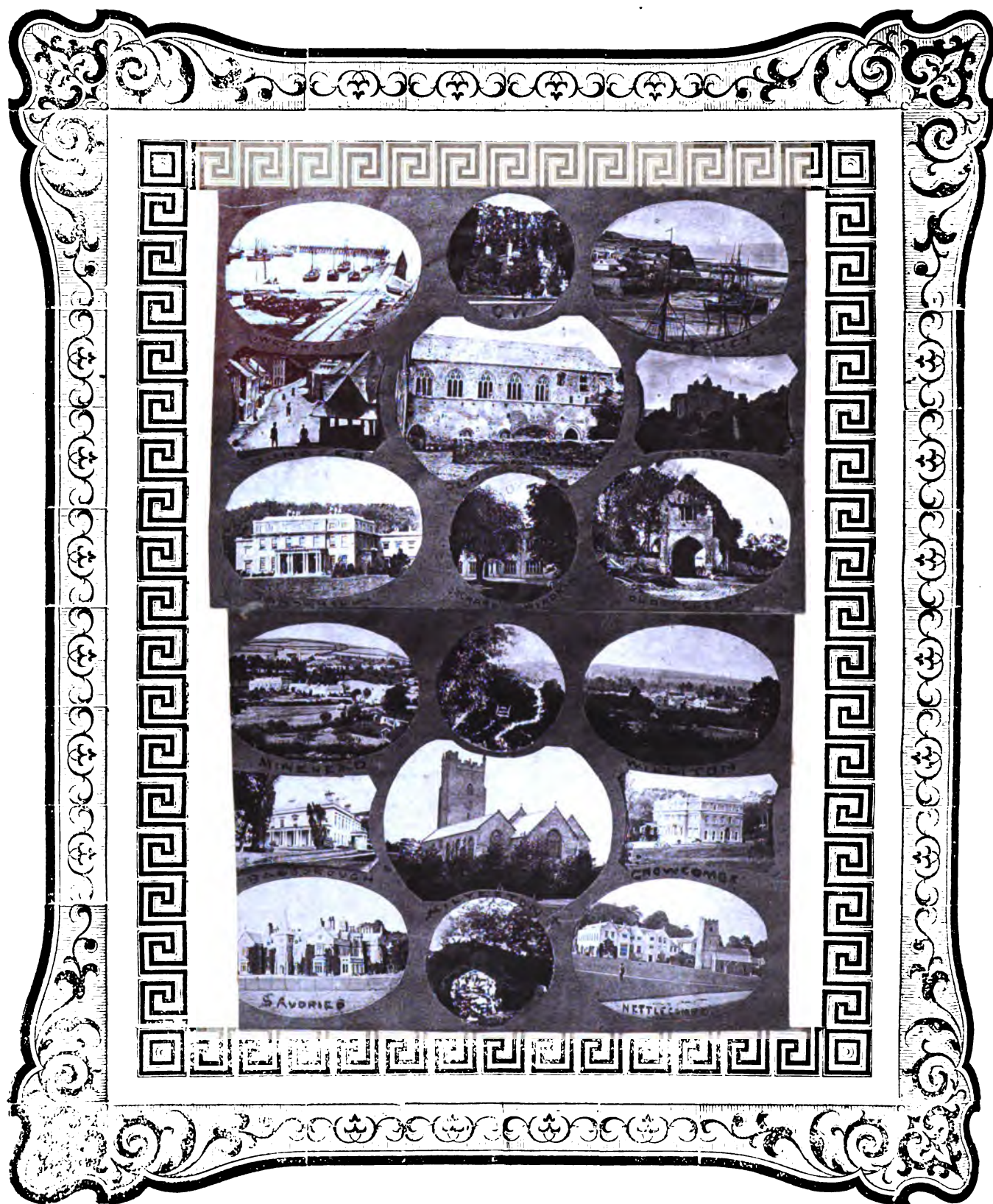
friends. Those who heard him grumble at the neglect with which he was treated, and at the profusion with which wealth was lavished on the bastards of Nell Gwynn and Madam Carwell, would have supposed him ripe for rebellion. But all this ill humour lasted only till the throne was really in danger. It was precisely when those whom the sovereign had loaded with wealth and honours shrank from his side that the country gentleman, so surly and mutinous in the season of his prosperity, rallied round him in a body. Thus, after murmuring twenty years at the misgovernment of Charles the Second, they came to his rescue in his extremity, when his own Secretaries of State and the Lords of his own Treasury had deserted him, and enabled him to gain a complete victory over the opposition; nor can there be any doubt that they would have shown equal loyalty to his brother James, if James would, even at the last moment, have refrained from outraging their strongest feeling. For there was one institution, and one only, which they prized even more than hereditary monarchy; and that institution was the Church of England. Their love of the Church was not, indeed, the effect of study or meditation. Few among them could have given any reason, drawn from Scripture or ecclesiastical history, for adhering to her doctrines, her ritual, and her polity; nor were they, as a class, by any means strict observers of that code of morality which is common to all Christian sects. But the experience of many ages proves that men may be ready to fight to the death, and to persecute without pity, for a religion whose creed they do not understand, and whose precepts they habitually disobey.

### The Clergy.

The rural clergy were more vehement in Toryism than the rural gentry, and were a class scarcely less important. It is to be observed, however, that the individual clergyman, as compared with the individual gentleman, then ranked much lower than in our days. The main support of the Church was derived from the tithe; and the tithe bore to the rent a much smaller ratio than at present. King estimated the whole income of the parochial and collegiate clergy at only four hundred and eighty thousand pounds a year; Davenant at only five hundred and forty-four thousand a year. It is certainly now more than seven times as great as the larger of these two sums. The average rent of the land has not, according to any estimate, increased proportionally. It follows that the rectors and vicars must have been, as compared with the neighbouring knights and squires, much poorer in the seventeenth than in the nineteenth century.

Down to the middle of the reign of Henry the Eighth no line of life was so attractive to ambitious and covetous natures as the priesthood. Then came a violent revolution. The abolition of the monasteries deprived the Church at once of the greater part of her wealth, and of her predominance in the Upper House of Parliament. There was no longer an Abbot of Glastonbury or an Abbot of Reading seated among the peers, and possessed of revenues equal to those of a powerful Earl. The princely splendour of William of Wykeham and of William of Waynflete had disappeared. The scarlet hat of the Cardinal, the silver cross of the Legate, were no more. The clergy had also lost the ascendancy which is the natural reward of superior mental cultivation. Once the circumstance that a man could read had raised a presumption that he was in orders. During the century which followed the accession of Elizabeth, scarce a single person of noble descent took orders. At the close of the reign of Charles the Second, two sons of peers were Bishops; four or five sons of peers were priests, and held valuable preferment: but these rare exceptions did not take away the reproach which lay on the body. The clergy were regarded as, on the whole, a plebeian class. And, indeed, for one who made the figure of a gentleman, ten were mere menial servants. A large proportion of those divines who had no benefices, or whose benefices were too small to afford a comfortable revenue, lived in the houses of laymen. It had long been evident that this practice tended to degrade the priestly character. Indeed, during the domination of the Puritans, many of the ejected ministers of the Church of England could obtain bread and shelter only by attaching themselves to the households of royalist gentlemen; and the habits which had been formed in those times of trouble continued long after the re-establishment of monarchy and episcopacy. In the mansions of men of liberal sentiments and cultivated understandings, the chaplain was doubtless treated with urbanity and kindness. His conversation, his literary assistance, his spiritual advice, were considered as an ample return for his food, his lodging, and his stipend. But this was not the general feeling of the country gentlemen. The coarse and ignorant squire, who thought that it belonged to his dignity to have grace said every day at his table by an ecclesiastic in full canonicals, found means to reconcile dignity with economy. A young Levite—such was the phrase then in use—might be had for his board, a small garret, and ten pounds a year, and might not only perform his own professional functions, might not only be the most patient of butts and of listeners, might not only be always ready in fine weather for bowls, and in rainy weather for shovelboard, but might also save





the expense of a gardener, or of a groom. Sometimes the reverend man nailed up the apricots; and sometimes he curried the coach horses. He cast up the farrier's bills. He walked ten miles with a message or parcel. He was permitted to dine with the family; but he was expected to content himself with the plainest fare. He might fill himself with the corned beef and the carrots; but as soon as the tarts and cheesecakes make their appearance, he quitted his seat, and stood aloof till he was summoned to return thanks for the repast, from a part of which he had been excluded. Perhaps, after some years of service, he was presented to a living sufficient to support him: but he often found it necessary to purchase his preferment by a species of Simony, which furnished an inexhaustible subject of pleasantry to three or four generations of scoffers. With his cure he was expected to take a wife. The wife had ordinarily been in the patron's service; and it was well if she was not suspected of standing too high in the patron's favour. Indeed, the nature of the matrimonial connections which the clergymen of that age were in the habit of forming is the most certain indication of the place which the order held in the social system. An Oxonian, writing a few months after the death of Charles the Second, complained bitterly, not only that the country attorney and the country apothecary looked down with disdain on the country clergyman, but that one of the lessons most earnestly inculcated on every girl of honourable family was to give no encouragement to a lover in orders, and that, if any young lady forgot this precept, she was almost as much disgraced as by an illicit amour. Clarendon, who assuredly bore no ill-will to the priesthood, mentions it as a sign of the confusion of ranks which the great rebellion had produced, that some damsels of noble families had bestowed themselves on divines. A waiting woman was generally considered as the most suitable helpmate for a parson. Queen Elizabeth, the head of the Church, had given what seemed to be a formal sanction to this prejudice, by issuing special orders that no clergyman should presume to espouse a servant girl without the consent of the master or mistress. During several generations accordingly the relation between divines and handmaidens was a theme for endless jest; nor would it be easy to find, in the comedy of the seventeenth century, a single instance of a clergyman who wins a spouse above the rank of a cook. Even so late as the time of George the Second, the keenest of all observers of life and manners, himself a priest, remarked that, in a great household, the chaplain was the resource of a lady's maid whose character had been blown upon, and who was therefore forced to give up hopes of catching the steward.

In general, the divine who quitted his chaplainship for a benefice and a wife, found that he had only exchanged one class of vexations for another. Hardly one living in fifty enabled the incumbent to bring up a family comfortably. As children multiplied and grew, the household of the priest became more and more beggarly. Holes appeared more and more plainly in the thatch of his parsonage and in his single cassock. Often it was only by toiling on his glebe, by feeding swine, and by loading dungcarts, that he could obtain daily bread; nor did his utmost exertions always prevent the bailiffs from taking his concordance and his inkstand in execution. It was a white day on which he was admitted into the kitchen of a great house, and regaled by the servants with cold meat and ale. His children were brought up like the children of the neighbouring peasantry. His boys followed the plough; and his girls went out to service. Study he found impossible: for the advowson of his living would hardly have sold for a sum sufficient to purchase a good theological library; and he might be considered as unusually lucky if he had ten or twelve dog-eared volumes among the pots and pans on his shelves. Even a keen and strong intellect might be expected to rust in so unfavourable a situation.

Assuredly there was at that time no lack in the English Church of ministers distinguished by abilities and learning. But it is to be observed that these ministers were not scattered among the rural population. They were brought together at a few places where the means of acquiring knowledge were abundant, and where the opportunities of vigorous intellectual exercise were frequent. At such places were to be found divines qualified by parts, by eloquence, by wide knowledge of literature, of science, and of life, to defend their Church victoriously against heretics and sceptics, to command the attention of frivolous and worldly congregations, to guide the deliberations of senates, and to make religion respectable, even in the most dissolute of courts. Some laboured to fathom the abysses of metaphysical theology; some were deeply versed in biblical criticism; and some threw light on the darkest parts of ecclesiastical history.

### The Yeomanry.

The power which the country gentlemen and country clergymen exercised in the rural districts was in some measure counterbalanced by the power of the yeomanry, an eminently manly and truehearted race. The petty proprietors who cultivated their own fields with their own hands, and enjoyed a modest competence, without affecting to have scutcheons and crests, or aspiring to sit on the bench of justice, then formed a much more important part

of the nation than at present. If we may trust the best statistical writers of that age, not less than a hundred and sixty thousand proprietors, who with their families must have made up more than a seventh of the whole population, derived their subsistence from little freehold estates. The average income of these small landholders, an income made up of rent, profit, and wages, was estimated at between sixty and seventy pounds a year. It was computed that the number of persons who tilled their own land was greater than the number of those who farmed the land of others. A large portion of the yeomanry had, from the time of the Reformation, leaned towards Puritanism, had, in the civil war, taken the side of the Parliament, had, after the Restoration, persisted in hearing Presbyterian and Independent preachers, had, at elections, strenuously supported the Exclusionists, and had continued, even after the discovery of the Rye House Plot and the proscription of the Whig leaders, to regard Popery and arbitrary power with unmitigated hostility.

### Cities and Towns.

Great as has been the change in the rural life in England since the Revolution, the change which has come to pass in the cities is still more amazing. At present above a sixth part of the nation is crowded into provincial towns of more than thirty thousand inhabitants. In the reign of Charles the Second no provincial town in the kingdom contained 30,000 inhabitants; and only four provincial towns contained so many as 10,000 inhabitants.

The population of every one of these places has, since the Revolution, much more than doubled. The population of some has multiplied sevenfold. The streets have been almost entirely rebuilt. Slate has succeeded to thatch, and brick to timber. The pavements and the lamps, the display of wealth in the principal shops, and the luxurious neatness of the dwellings occupied by the gentry would, in the seventeenth century, have seemed miraculous. Yet is the relative importance of the old capitals of counties by no means what it was. Younger towns—towns which are rarely or never mentioned in our early history, and which sent no representatives to our early Parliaments—have, within the memory of persons still living, grown to a greatness which this generation contemplates with wonder and pride, not unaccompanied by awe and anxiety.

The most eminent of these towns were indeed known in the seventeenth century as respectable seats of industry. Nay, their rapid progress and their vast opulence were then sometimes described in language which seems ludicrous to a man who has seen their present grandeur.

### Turnpike Roads.

It was by the highways that both travellers and goods generally passed from place to place; and those highways appear to have been far worse than might have been expected from the degree of wealth and civilisation which the nation had even then attained. On the best lines of communication the ruts were deep, the descents precipitous, and the way often such as it was hardly possible to distinguish, in the dusk, from the unenclosed heath and fen which lay on both sides. It was only in fine weather that the whole breadth of the road was available for wheeled vehicles. Often the mud lay deep on the right and left; and only a narrow track of firm ground rose above the quagmire. At such times obstructions and quarrels were frequent, and the path was sometimes blocked up a long time by carriers, neither of whom would break the way. It happened, almost every day, that coaches stuck fast, until a team of cattle could be procured from some neighbouring farm to tug them out of the slough. But in bad seasons the traveller had to encounter inconveniences still more serious.

Soon after the Restoration this grievance attracted the notice of Parliament; and an act, the first of our many turnpike acts, was passed, imposing a small toll upon travellers and goods, for the purpose of keeping some parts of this important line of communication in good repair. This innovation, however, excited many murmurs; and the great avenues to the capital were long left under the old system. A change was at length effected, but not without much difficulty. For unjust and absurd taxation to which men are accustomed is often borne far more willingly than the most reasonable impost which is new. It was not till many toll bars had been violently pulled down, till the troops had in many districts been forced to act against the people, and till much blood had been shed, that a good system was introduced. By slow degrees reason triumphed over prejudice; and our island is now crossed in every direction by near thirty thousand miles of turnpike road.

On the best highways heavy articles were, in the time of Charles the Second, generally conveyed from place to place by stage waggons. In the straw of these vehicles nestled a crowd of passengers, who could not afford to travel by coach or on horseback, and who were prevented by infirmity, or by the weight of their luggage, from going on foot. The expense of transmitting heavy goods in this way was enormous. The charge was about fifteen pence a ton for every mile, more by a third than was afterwards charged on turnpike roads, and fifteen times



what is now demanded by railway companies. The cost of conveyance amounted to a prohibitory tax on many useful articles. Coal in particular was never seen except in the districts where it was produced, or in the districts to which it could be carried by sea, and was indeed always known in the south of England by the name of sea coal.

On byroads, goods were carried by long trains of pack-horses. These strong and patient beasts, the breed of which is now extinct, were attended by a class of men who seem to have borne much resemblance to the Spanish muleteers. A traveller of humble condition often found it convenient to perform a journey mounted on a pack-saddle between two baskets, under the care of these hardy guides. The expense of this mode of conveyance was small. But the caravan moved at a foot's pace; and in winter the cold was often insupportable.

The rich commonly travelled in their own carriages, with at least four horses. A coach and six is in our time never seen, except as part of some pageant. The frequent mention therefore of such equipages in old books is likely to mislead us. We attribute to magnificence what was really the effect of a very disagreeable necessity. People, in the time of Charles the Second, travelled with six horses, because with a smaller number there was great danger of sticking fast in the mire. Nor were even six horses always sufficient. Vanbrugh, in the succeeding generation, described with great humour the way in which a country gentleman, newly chosen a member of Parliament, went up to London. On that occasion all the exertions of six beasts, two of which had been taken from the plough, could not save the family coach from being imbedded in a quagmire.

### Stage Coaches.

The ordinary day's journey of a flying coach was about fifty miles in the summer; but in winter, when the ways were bad and the nights long, little more than thirty. The passengers, six in number, were all seated in the carriage; for accidents were so frequent that it would have been most perilous to mount the roof. The ordinary fare was about twopence halfpenny a mile in summer, and somewhat more in winter.

This mode of travelling, which by Englishmen of the present day would be regarded as insufferably slow, seemed to our ancestors wonderfully and indeed alarmingly rapid. In a work published a few months before the death of Charles the Second, the flying coaches are extolled as far superior to any similar vehicles ever known in the world. Their velocity is the subject of special commendation, and is triumphantly contrasted with the slug-

gish pace of the continental posts. But with boasts like these was mingled the sound of complaint and invective. The interests of large classes had been unfavourably affected by the establishment of the new diligences; and, as usual, many persons were, from mere stupidity and obstinacy, disposed to clamour against the innovation, simply because it was an innovation. It was vehemently argued that this mode of conveyance would be fatal to the breed of horses and to the noble art of horsemanship; that numerous inns, at which mounted travellers had been in the habit of stopping, would be deserted, and no longer pay any rent; that the new carriages were too hot in summer and too cold in winter; that the passengers were grievously annoyed by invalids and crying children; that the coach sometimes reached the inn so late that it was impossible to get supper, and sometimes started so early that it was impossible to get breakfast. On these grounds it was gravely recommended that no public coach should be permitted to have more than four horses, to start oftener than once a week, or to go more than thirty miles a day. It was hoped that, if this regulation were adopted, all except the sick and lame would return to the old mode of travelling.

In spite of the attractions of the flying coaches, it was still usual for men who enjoyed health and vigour, and who were not encumbered by much baggage, to perform long journeys on horseback. If the traveller wished to move expeditiously, he rode post. Fresh saddle horses and guides were to be procured at convenient distances along all the great lines of road. The charge was threepence a mile for each horse, and fourpence a stage for the guide. In this manner, when the ways were good, it was possible to travel, for a considerable time, as rapidly as by any conveyance known in England, till vehicles were propelled by steam. There were as yet no post chaises; nor could those who rode in their own coaches ordinarily procure a change of horses.

Whatever might be the way in which a journey was performed, the travellers, unless they were numerous and well armed, ran considerable risk of being stopped and plundered. The mounted highwayman, a marauder known to our generation only from books, was to be found on every main road. The public authorities seem to have been often at a loss how to deal with the plunderers. At one time it was announced in the "Gazette" that several persons, who were strongly suspected of being highwaymen, but against whom there was not sufficient evidence, would be paraded at Newgate in riding dresses; their horses would also be shown; and all gentlemen who had been robbed were invited to inspect this singular exhibi-

tion. On another occasion a pardon was publicly offered to a robber if he would give up some rough diamonds, of immense value, which he had taken when he stopped the Harwich mail. A short time after appeared another proclamation, warning the innkeepers that the eye of the Government was upon them. Their criminal connivance, it was affirmed, enabled banditti to infest the roads with impunity. That these suspicions were not without foundation is proved by the dying speeches of some penitent robbers of that age, who appear to have received from the innkeepers services much resembling those which Farquhar's Boniface rendered to Gibbet.

It was necessary to the success and even to the safety of the highwayman that he should be a bold and skilful rider, and that his manners and appearance should be such as suited the master of a fine horse. He therefore held an aristocratical position in the community of thieves, appeared at fashionable coffee houses and gaming houses, and betted with men of quality on the race ground. Sometimes, indeed, he was a man of good family and education. A romantic interest therefore attached, and perhaps still attaches, to the names of freebooters of this class. The vulgar eagerly drank in tales of their ferocity and audacity, of their occasional acts of generosity and good nature, of their amours, of their miraculous escapes, of their desperate struggles, and of their manly bearing at the bar and in the cart.

### The Inns of the Olden Time.

The importance to strangers and visitors of good inns in a country cannot well be over-rated. The English nation has generally been famous for this peculiarity. Probably in the times gone by, when so much more time was spent on a journey than at present, it was of still greater importance.

Our favourite historian, Macaulay, has given us a capital insight on this subject. We therefore purpose to continue a few extracts on this and similar matters from his entertaining works.

All the various dangers by which the traveller was beset were greatly increased by darkness. He was therefore commonly desirous of having the shelter of a roof during the night; and such shelter it was not difficult to obtain. From a very early period the inns of England had been renowned. Our first great poet had described the excellent accommodation which they afforded to the pilgrims of the fourteenth century. Two hundred years later, under the reign of Elizabeth, William Harrison gave a lively description of the plenty and comfort of the great hostleries. The Continent of Europe, he said, could show

nothing like them. There were some in which two or three hundred people, with their horses, could, without difficulty, be lodged and fed. The bedding, the tapestry, above all the clean and fine linen, was matter of wonder. Valuable plate was often set on the tables. Nay, there were signs which had cost thirty or forty pounds. In the seventeenth century England was noted for its excellent inns of every rank. The traveller sometimes, in a small village, lighted on a public house such as Walton has described, where the brick floor was swept clean, where the walls were stuck round with ballads, where the sheets smelt of lavender, and where a blazing fire, a cup of good ale, and a dish of trout fresh from the neighbouring brook were to be procured at small charge. At the larger houses of entertainment were to be found beds hung with silk, choice cookery, and claret equal to the best which was drunk in London. The innkeepers too, it was said, were not like other innkeepers. On the Continent the landlord was the tyrant of those who crossed the threshold. In England he was a servant. Never was an Englishman more at home than when "he took his ease in his inn." Even men of fortune, who might in their own mansions have enjoyed every luxury, were often in the habit of passing their evenings in the parlour of some neighbouring house of public entertainment. They seem to have thought that comfort and freedom could in no other place be enjoyed in equal perfection. This feeling continued during many generations to be a national peculiarity. The liberty and jollity of inns long furnished matter to our novelists and dramatists. Johnson declared that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity; and Shenstone gently complained that no private roof, however friendly, gave the wanderer so warm a welcome as that which was to be found at an inn.

Many conveniences, which were unknown at Hampton Court or Whitehall in the seventeenth century, are in all modern hotels. Yet on the whole it is certain that the improvement of our houses of public entertainment has by no means kept pace with the improvement of our roads and of our conveyances. Nor is this strange; for it is evident that, all other circumstances being supposed equal, the inns will be best where the means of locomotion are worst. The quicker the rate of travelling, the less important is it that there should be numerous agreeable resting places for the traveller. A hundred and sixty years ago a person who came up to the capital from a remote county generally required, by the way, twelve or fifteen meals, and lodging for five or six nights. If he were a great man, he expected the meals and lodging to be comfortable, and even luxurious. At present we fly from



York or Exeter to London by the light of a single winter's day. At present, therefore, a traveller seldom interrupts his journey merely for the sake of rest and refreshment. The consequence is that hundreds of excellent inns have fallen into utter decay. In a short time no good houses of that description will be found, except at places where strangers are likely to be detained by business or pleasure.

### The Post Office.

The mode in which correspondence was carried on between distant places may excite the scorn of the present generation; yet it was such as might have moved the admiration and envy of the polished nations of antiquity, or of the contemporaries of Raleigh and Cecil. A rude and imperfect establishment of posts for the conveyance of letters had been set up by Charles the First, and had been swept away by the civil war. Under the Commonwealth the design was resumed. At the Restoration the proceeds of the Post Office, after all expenses had been paid, were settled on the Duke of York. On most lines of road the mails went out and came in only on the alternate days. The bags were carried on horseback day and night at the rate of about five miles an hour.

The revenue of this establishment was not derived solely from the charge for the transmission of letters. The Post Office alone was entitled to furnish post horses; and, from the care with which this monopoly was guarded, we may infer that it was found profitable. If, indeed, a traveller had waited half an hour without being supplied, he might hire a horse wherever he could.

The revenue of the Post Office was from the first constantly increasing. In the year of the Restoration a committee of the House of Commons, after strict enquiry, had estimated the net receipt at about twenty thousand pounds. At the close of the reign of Charles the Second, the net receipt was little short of fifty thousand pounds; and this was then thought a stupendous sum. The gross receipt was about seventy thousand pounds. The charge for conveying a single letter was twopence for eighty miles, and threepence for a longer distance. The postage increased in proportion to the weight of the packet. At present a single letter is carried to the extremity of Scotland or of Ireland for a penny; and the monopoly of post horses has long ceased to exist. Yet the gross annual receipts of the department amount to more than eighteen hundred thousand pounds, and the net receipts to more than seven hundred thousand pounds. It is, therefore, scarcely possible to doubt that the number of letters now conveyed by mail is seventy times the number which was so conveyed at the time of the accession of James the Second.

No part of the load which the old mails carried out was more important than the news-letters. In 1685 nothing like the London daily paper of our time existed, or could exist. Neither the necessary capital nor the necessary skill was to be found. Freedom, too, was wanting, a want as fatal as that of either capital or skill. The press was not indeed at that moment under a general censorship. The licensing act, which had been passed soon after the Restoration, had expired in 1679. Any person might therefore print, at his own risk, a history, a sermon, or a poem, without the previous approbation of any officer; but the Judges were unanimously of opinion that this liberty did not extend to Gazettes, and that, by the common law of England, no man, not authorised by the crown, had a right to publish political news. [Specimens of the news letters have been exhibited and explained at the Somerset Archaeological Society's meetings.]

### Literature, &c.

Literature which could be carried by the post bag then formed the greater part of the intellectual nutriment ruminated by the country divines and country justices. The difficulty and expense of conveying large packets from place to place was so great, that an extensive work was longer in making its way from Paternoster Row to Somersetshire than it now is in reaching Kentucky. How scantily a rural parsonage was then furnished, even with books the most necessary to a theologian, has already been remarked. The houses of the gentry were not more plentifully supplied. Few knights of the shire had libraries so good as may now perpetually be found in a servants' hall, or in the back parlour of a small shopkeeper. An esquire passed among his neighbours for a great scholar if Hudibras and Baker's Chronicle, Tarlton's Jests and the Seven Champions of Christendom, lay in his hall window among the fishing rods and fowling-pieces.

As to the lady of the manor and her daughters, their literary stores generally consisted of a prayer-book and a receipt-book. But in truth they lost little by living in rural seclusion. For, even in the highest ranks, and in those situations which afforded the greatest facilities for mental improvement, the English women of that generation were decidedly worse educated than they have been at any other time since the revival of learning. At an earlier period they had studied the masterpieces of ancient genius. In the present day they seldom bestow much attention on the dead languages; but they are familiar with the tongue of Pascal and Moliere, with the tongue of Dante and Tasso, with the tongue of Goethe and Schiller; nor is there any purer or more graceful

English than that which accomplished women now speak and write. But during the latter part of the seventeenth century the culture of the female mind seems to have been almost entirely neglected. If a damsel had the least smattering of literature she was regarded as a prodigy. Ladies highly born, highly bred, and naturally quick witted, were unable to write a line in their mother tongue without solecisms and faults of spelling such as a charity girl would now be ashamed to commit.

### The Puritans and their Opponents.

The wife and the Puritans have never been on friendly terms. There was no sympathy between the two classes. They looked on the whole system of human life from different points and in different lights. The earnest of each was the jest of the other. The pleasures of each were the torments of the other. To the stern precisian even the innocent sport of the fancy seemed a crime. To light and festive natures the solemnity of the zealous brethren furnished copious matter of ridicule. From the Reformation to the civil war, almost every writer, gifted with a fine sense of the ludicrous, had taken some opportunity of assailing the straight-haired, snuffing, whining saints, who christened their children out of the book of Nehemiah, who groaned in spirit at the sight of Jack in the Green, and who thought it impious to taste plum porridge on Christmas-day. At length a time came when the laughers began to look grave in their turn. The rigid, ungainly zealots, after having furnished much good sport during two generations, rose up in arms, conquered, ruled, and, grimly smiling, trod down under their feet the whole crowd of mockers. The wounds inflicted by gay and petulant malice were retaliated with the gloomy and implacable malice peculiar to bigots who mistake their own rancour for virtue. The theatres were closed. The players were flogged. The press was put under the guardianship of austere licensors. The Muses were banished from their own favourite haunts, Cambridge and Oxford. Cowley, Crashaw, and Cleveland were ejected from their fellowships. The young candidate for academical honours was no longer required to write Ovidian epistles or Virgilian pastorals, but was strictly interrogated by a synod of lowering Supralapsarians as to the day and hour when he experienced the new birth. Such a system was, of course, fruitful of hypocrites. Under sober clothing and under visages composed to the expression of austerity lay hid, during several years, the intense desire of license and of revenge. At length that desire was gratified. The Restoration emancipated thousands of minds from a yoke which had become insupportable. The old fight recom-

menced, but with an animosity altogether new. It was now not a sportive combat, but a war to the death. The Roundhead had no better quarter to expect from those whom he had persecuted than a cruel slave driver can expect from insurgent slaves still bearing the marks of his collars and his scourges.

### Mechanics' Wages.

The remuneration of workmen employed in manufactures has always been higher than that of the tillers of the soil. In the year 1680, a member of the House of Commons remarked that the high wages paid in this country made it impossible for our textures to maintain a competition with the produce of the Indian looms. An English mechanic, he said, instead of slaving like a native of Bengal for a piece of copper, exacted a shilling a day. Other evidence is extant, which proves that a shilling a day was the pay to which the English manufacturer then thought himself entitled, but that he was often forced to work for less. The common people of that age were not in the habit of meeting for public discussion, of haranguing, or of petitioning Parliament. No newspaper pleaded their cause. It was in rude rhyme that their love and hatred, their exultation and their distress, found utterance. A great part of their history is to be learned only from their ballads. One of the most remarkable of the popular lays chanted about the streets of our towns and cities in the time of Charles the Second may still be read on the original broadside. It is the vehement and bitter cry of labour against capital. It describes the good old times when every artisan employed in the woollen manufacture lived as well as a farmer. But those times were past. Sixpence a day was now all that could be earned by hard labour at the loom. If the poor complained that they could not live on so small a pittance, they were told that they were free to take it or leave it. For so miserable a recompense were the producers of wealth compelled to toil, rising early and lying down late, while the master clothier, eating, sleeping, and idling, became rich by their exertions. A shilling a day, the poet declares, is what the weaver would have, if justice were done. We may therefore conclude that, in the generation which preceded the Revolution, a workman employed in the great staple manufacture of England thought himself fairly paid if he gained six shillings a week.

It may here be noticed that the practice of setting children prematurely to work, a practice which the State, the legitimate protector of those who cannot protect themselves, has, in our time, wisely and humanely interdicted, prevailed in the seventeenth century to an extent which,

when compared with the extent of the manufacturing system, seems almost incredible. At Norwich, the chief seat of the clothing trade, a little creature of six years old was thought fit for labour. Several writers of that time, and among them some who were considered as eminently benevolent, mention, with exultation, the fact that, in that single city, boys and girls of very tender age created wealth exceeding what was necessary for their own subsistence by twelve thousand pounds a year. The more carefully we examine the history of the past, the more reason shall we find to dissent from those who imagine that our age has been fruitful of new social evils. The truth is that the evils are, with scarcely an exception, old. That which is new is the intelligence which discerns and the humanity which remedies them.

When we pass from the weavers of cloth to a different class of artisans, our inquiries will still lead us to nearly the same conclusions. During several generations, the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital have kept a register of the wages paid to different classes of workmen who have been employed in the repairs of the building. From this valuable record it appears that, in the course of a hundred and twenty years, the daily earnings of the bricklayer have risen from half a crown to four and tenpence, those of the mason from half a crown to five and threepence, those of the carpenter from half a crown to five and fivepence, and those of the plumber from three shillings to five and sixpence.

It seems clear, therefore, that the wages of labour, estimated in money, were, in 1685, not more than half of what they now are; and there were few articles important to the working man of which the price was not, in 1685, more than half of what it now is. Beer was undoubtedly much cheaper in that age than at present. Meat was also cheaper, but was still so dear that hundreds of thousands of families scarcely knew the taste of it. In the cost of wheat there has been very little change. The average price of the quarter, during the last twelve years of Charles the Second, was fifty shillings. Bread, therefore, such as is now given to the inmates of a workhouse, was then seldom seen, even on the trencher of a yeoman or of a shopkeeper. The great majority of the nation lived almost entirely on rye, barley, and oats.

The produce of tropical countries, the produce of the mines, the produce of machinery, was positively dearer than at present. Among the commodities for which the labourer would have had to pay higher in 1685 than his posterity now pay were sugar, salt, coals, candles, soap, shoes, stockings, and generally all articles of clothing and all articles of bedding. It may be added, that the old

coats and blankets would have been, not only more costly, but less serviceable than the modern fabrics.

It must be remembered that those labourers who were able to maintain themselves and their families by means of wages were not the most necessitous members of the community. Beneath them lay a large class which could not subsist without some aid from the parish. There can hardly be a more important test of the condition of the common people than the ratio which this class bears to the whole society. At present the men, women and children who receive relief appear from the official returns to be, in bad years, one-tenth of the inhabitants of England, and, in good years, one-thirteenth. Gregory King estimated them in his time at about a fourth; and this estimate, which all our respect for his authority will scarcely prevent us from calling extravagant, was pronounced by Davenant eminently judicious.

### The Poor Rate.

As regards the value, we are not quite without the means of forming an estimate for ourselves. The poor-rate was undoubtedly the heaviest tax borne by our ancestors in those days. It was computed, in the reign of Charles the Second, at near seven hundred thousand pounds a-year, much more than the produce either of the excise or of the customs, and little less than half the entire revenue of the crown. The poor-rate went on increasing rapidly, and appears to have risen in a short time to between eight and nine hundred thousand a year, that is to say, to one-sixth of what it now is. The population was then less than a third of what it now is. The minimum of wages, estimated in money, was half of what it now is; and we can therefore hardly suppose that the average allowance made to a pauper can have been more than half of what it now is. It seems to follow that the proportion of the English people which received parochial relief then must have been larger than the proportion which receives relief now. It is good to speak on such questions with diffidence; but it has certainly never yet been proved that pauperism was a less heavy burden or a less serious social evil during the last quarter of the seventeenth century than it is in our own time.

### State of the People.

It is time that this description of our country should draw to a close. Yet one subject of the highest moment still remains untouched. Nothing has yet been said of the great body of the people, of those who held the plough, who tended the oxen, or who toiled at the looms. Nor can very

much be said. The most numerous class is precisely the class respecting which we have the most meagre information. In those times philanthropists did not yet regard it as a sacred duty, nor had demagogues yet found it a lucrative trade, to talk and write about the distress of the labourer. History was too much occupied with courts and camps to spare a line for the hut of the peasant or the garret of the mechanic. The press now oftens sends forth in a day a greater quantity of discussion and declamation about the condition of the working man than was published during the twenty-eight years which elapsed between the Restoration and the Revolution. But it would be a great error to infer from the increase of complaint that there has been any increase of misery.

The great criterion of the state of the common people is the amount of their wages; and as four-fifths of the common people were, in the seventeenth century, employed in agriculture, it is especially important to ascertain what were then the wages of agricultural industry. On this subject we have the means of arriving at conclusions sufficiently exact for our purpose.

### Agricultural Wages.

Sir William Petty, whose mere assertion carries great weight, informs us that a labourer was by no means in the lowest state who received for a day's work fourpence with food, or eightpence without food. Four shillings a week therefore were, according to Petty's calculation, fair agricultural wages.

That this calculation was not remote from the truth we have abundant proof. About the beginning of the year 1685 the justices, in the exercise of a power entrusted to them by an Act of Elizabeth, fixed, at their quarter sessions, a scale of wages for the county, and notified that every employer who gave more than the authorised sum, and every working man who received more, would be liable to punishment. The wages of the common agricultural labourer, from March to September, were fixed at the precise amount mentioned by Petty, namely, four shillings a week, without food. From September to March the wages were to be only three and sixpence a week.

But in that age, as in ours, the earnings of the peasants were very different in different parts of the kingdom.

### The Working Man.

In one respect it must be admitted that the progress of civilisation has diminished the physical comforts of a portion of the poorest class. It has already been mentioned that, before the Revolution, many thousands of square miles, now enclosed and cultivated, were marsh,

forest, and heath. Of this wild land much was, by law, common, and much of what was not common by law was worth so little that the proprietors suffered it to be common in fact. In such a tract, squatters and trespassers were tolerated to an extent now unknown. The peasant who dwelt there could, at little or no charge, procure occasionally some palatable addition to his hard fare, and provide himself with fuel for the winter. He kept a flock of geese on what is now an orchard rich with apple blossom. He snared wild fowl on the fen which has long since been drained and divided into corn fields and turnip fields. He cut turf among the furze bushes on the moor which is now a meadow bright with clover and renowned for butter and cheese. The progress of agriculture and the increase of population necessarily deprived him of these privileges. But against this disadvantage a long list of advantages is to be set off. Of the blessings which civilisation and philosophy bring with them a large proportion is common to all ranks, and would, if withdrawn, be missed as painfully by the labourer as by the peer. The marketplace which the rustic can now reach with his cart in an hour was, a hundred and sixty years ago, a day's journey for him. The street which now affords to the artisan, during the whole night, a secure, a convenient, and a brilliantly lighted walk was, a hundred and sixty years ago, so dark after sunset that he would not have been able to see his hand, so ill paved that he would have run constant risk of breaking his neck, and so ill watched that he would have been in imminent danger of being knocked down and plundered of his small earnings. Every bricklayer who falls from a scaffold, every sweeper of a crossing who is run over by a carriage, may now have his wounds dressed and his limbs set with a skill such as, a hundred and sixty years ago, all the wealth of a great lord like Ormond, or of a merchant prince like Clayton, could not have purchased. Some frightful diseases have been extirpated by science; and some have been banished by police. The term of human life has been lengthened over the whole kingdom, and especially in the towns. The year 1685 was not accounted sickly; yet in the year 1685 more than one in twenty-three of the inhabitants of the capital died. At present only one inhabitant of the capital in forty dies annually.

Still more important is the benefit which all orders of society, and especially the lower orders, have derived from the mollifying influence of civilisation on the national character. The groundwork of that character has indeed been the same through many generations, in the sense in which the groundwork of the character of an individual may be said to be the same when he is a rude and thought-

less schoolboy and when he is a refined and accomplished man. It is pleasing to reflect that the public mind has softened while it has ripened, and that we have, in the course of ages, become not only a wiser, but also a kinder people. There is scarcely a page of the history or lighter literature of the seventeenth century which does not contain some proof that our ancestors were less humane than their posterity. The discipline of workshops, of schools, of private families, though not more efficient than at present, was infinitely harsher. Masters, well born and bred, were in the habit of beating their servants. Pedagogues knew no way of imparting knowledge but by beating their pupils. Husbands, of decent station, were not ashamed to beat their wives. The implacability of hostile factions was such as we can scarcely conceive. If an offender were put into the pillory, it was well if he escaped with life from the shower of brickbats and paving-stones. If he were tied to the cart's tail, the crowd pressed round him, imploring the hangman to give it the fellow well, and make him howl. Gentlemen arranged parties of pleasure to gaol on court-days for the purpose of seeing a wretched woman who beat hemp there whipped. A man pressed to death for refusing to plead, a woman burned for coining, excited less sympathy than is now felt for a galled horse or an overdriven ox. Fights compared with which a boxing-match is a refined and humane spectacle were among the favourite diversions of a large part of the town. Multitudes assembled to see gladiators hack each other to pieces with deadly weapons, and shouted with delight when one of the combatants lost a finger or an eye. The prisons were hells on earth, seminaries of every crime and of every disease. At the assizes the lean and yellow culprits brought with them from their cells to the dock an atmosphere of stench and pestilence which sometimes avenged them signally on bench, bar, and jury. But on all this misery society looked with profound indifference. Nowhere could be found that sensitive and restless compassion which has, in our time, extended a powerful protection to the factory child, to the Hindoo widow, to the negro slave, which pries into the stores and water-casks of every emigrant ship, which winces at every lash laid on the back of a drunken soldier, which will not suffer the thief in the hulks to be ill fed or overworked, and which has repeatedly endeavoured to save the life even of a murderer. It is true that compassion ought, like all other feelings, to be under the government of reason, and has, for want of such government, produced some ridiculous and some deplorable effects. But the more we study the annals of the past, the more shall we rejoice that we live in a merciful age, in an age in which cruelty is

abhorred, and in which pain, even when deserved, is inflicted reluctantly and from a sense of duty. Every class doubtless has gained largely by this great moral change; but the class which has gained most is the poorest, the most dependant and the most defenceless.

### "The Good Old Times."

It may at first sight seem very strange that society, while constantly moving forward with eager speed, should be constantly looking backward with tender regret. But these two propensities, however inconsistent they may appear, can easily be resolved into the same principle. Both spring from our impatience of the state in which we actually are. That impatience, while it stimulates us to surpass preceding generations, disposes us to overrate their happiness. It is, in some sense, unreasonable and ungrateful in us to be constantly discontented with a condition which is constantly improving. But, in truth, there is constant improvement precisely because there is constant discontent. If we were perfectly satisfied with the present, we should cease to contrive, to labour, and to save with a view to the future. And it is natural that, being dissatisfied with the present, we should form a too favourable estimate of the past.

In truth we are under a deception similar to that which misleads the traveller in the Arabian desert. Beneath the caravan all is dry and bare: but far in advance, and far in the rear, is the semblance of refreshing waters. The pilgrims hasten forward and find nothing but sand where, an hour before, they had seen a lake. They turn their eyes and see a lake where, an hour before, they were toiling through sand. A similar illusion seems to haunt nations through every stage of the long progress from poverty and barbarism to the highest degrees of opulence and civilisation. But if we resolutely chase the mirage backward, we shall find it recede before us into the regions of fabulous antiquity. It is now the fashion to place the golden age of England in times when noblemen were destitute of comforts the want of which would be intolerable to a modern footman, when farmers and shopkeepers breakfasted on loaves the very sight of which would raise a riot in a modern workhouse, when to have a clean shirt once a week was a privilege reserved for the higher class of gentry, when men died faster in the purest country air than they now die in the most pestilential lanes of our towns, and when men died faster in the lanes of our towns than they now die on the coast of Guiana. We, too, shall in our turn be outstripped, and in our turn be envied. It may well be, in the twentieth century, that the peasant of Somersetshire may think himself miserably paid with

twenty shillings a week; that the carpenter may receive ten shillings a day; that labouring men may be as little used to dine without meat as they now are to eat rye bread; that sanitary police and medical discoveries may have added several more years to the average length of human life; that numerous comforts and luxuries which are now unknown, or confined to a few, may be within the reach of every diligent and thrifty working man. And yet it may then be the mode to assert that the increase of wealth and the progress of science have benefitted the few at the expense of the many, and to talk of the reign of Queen Victoria as the time when England was truly merry England, when all classes were bound together by brotherly sympathy, when the rich did not grind the faces of the poor, and when the poor did not envy the splendour of the rich.

### Soldiers' Pay.

In 1661 the justices of the peace had fixed the wages of the labourer, who was not boarded, at six shillings in winter and seven in summer. This seems to have been the highest remuneration given in the kingdom for agricultural labour between the Restoration and the Revolution; and it is to be observed that, in the year in which this order was made, the necessities of life were immoderately dear. Wheat was at seventy shillings the quarter, which would even now be considered as almost a famine price.

These facts are in perfect accordance with another fact which seems to deserve consideration. It is evident that, in a country where no man can be compelled to become a soldier, the ranks of an army cannot be filled if the government offers much less than the wages of common rustic labour. At present the pay and beer money of a private in a regiment of the line amounts to seven shillings and seven-pence a week. This stipend, coupled with the hope of a pension, does not attract the English youth in sufficient numbers; and it is found necessary to supply the deficiency by enlisting largely from among the poorer population of Munster and Connaught. The pay of the private foot soldier in 1685 was only four shillings and eightpence a week; yet it is certain that the government in that year found no difficulty in obtaining many thousands of English recruits at very short notice. The pay of the private foot soldier in the army of the Commonwealth had been seven shillings a week, that is to say—as much as a corporal received under Charles the Second; and seven shillings a week had been found sufficient to fill the ranks with men decidedly superior to the generality of the people. On the whole, therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that, in the reign of Charles the Second, the ordinary wages of the peasant did not exceed four shillings a week;

but that, in some parts of the kingdom, five shillings, six shillings, and during the summer months even seven shillings, were paid. At present a district where a man earns only seven shillings a week is thought to be in a state shocking to humanity. The average is very much higher; and, in prosperous counties, the weekly wages of husbandmen amount to twelve, fourteen, and even sixteen shillings.

### The Country Squire in London.

When the lord of a manor appeared in Fleet-street, he was as easily distinguished from the resident population as a Turk or Lascar. His dress, his gait, his accent, the manner in which he gazed at the shops, stumbled into the gutters, ran against the porters, and stood under the waterspouts, marked him out as an excellent subject for the operations of swindlers and banterers. Bullies jostled him into the kennel. Hackney coachmen splashed him from head to foot. Thieves explored with perfect security the huge pockets of his horseman's coat, while he stood entranced by the splendour of the Lord Mayor's show. Moneydroppers, sore from the cart's tail, introduced themselves to him, and appeared to him the most honest friendly gentlemen that he had ever seen. If he went into a shop, he was instantly discerned to be a fit purchaser of every thing that nobody else would buy, of second-hand embroidery, copper rings, and watches that would not go. If he rambled into any fashionable coffee house, he became a mark for the insolent derision of fops and the grave waggery of Templars. Enraged and mortified, he soon returned to his mansion, and there, in the homage of his tenants and the conversation of his boon companions, found consolation for the vexations and humiliations which he had undergone. There he was once more a great man, and saw nothing above himself except when at the assizes he took his seat on the bench near the judge, or when at the muster of the militia he saluted the Lord-Lieutenant.

### Difficulty of Travelling.

The chief cause which made the fusion of the different elements of society so imperfect was the extreme difficulty which our ancestors found in passing from place to place. Of all inventions, the alphabet and the printing-press alone excepted, those inventions which abridge distance have done most for the civilisation of our species. Every improvement of the means of locomotion benefits mankind morally and intellectually as well as materially, and not only facilitates the interchange of the various productions of nature and art, but tends to remove national and pro-

vincial antipathies, and to bind together all the branches of the great human family. In the seventeenth century the inhabitants of London were, for almost every practical purpose, farther from Somerset than they now are from Edinburgh, and further from Edinburgh than they now are from Vienna.

There was very little internal communication by water. A few attempts had been made to deepen and embank the natural streams, but with slender success. Hardly a single navigable canal had been even projected.

### Internal Communication.

In some parts none but the strongest horses could, in winter, get through the bog, in which, at every step, they sank deep. The markets were often inaccessible during several months. It is said that the fruits of the earth were sometimes suffered to rot in one place, while in another place, distant only a few miles, the supply fell short of the demand. The wheeled carriages were, in this district, often pulled

by oxen. When Prince George of Denmark visited the stately mansion of Petworth in wet weather, he was six hours in going nine miles; and it was necessary that a body of sturdy hinds should be on each side of his coach, in order to prop it. Of the carriages which conveyed his retinue several were upset and injured. A letter from one of the party has been preserved, in which the unfortunate courtier complains that, during fourteen hours, he never once alighted, except when his coach was overturned or stuck fast in the mud.

One chief cause of the badness of the roads seems to have been the defective state of the law. Every parish was bound to repair the highways which passed through it. The peasantry were forced to give their gratuitous labour six days in the year. If this was not sufficient, hired labour was employed, and the expense was met by a parochial rate. That a route connecting two great towns which have a large and thriving trade with each other should be maintained at the cost of a rural population scattered between them is obviously unjust.



# West Somerset

## During the Reign of the Georges.

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ALTHOUGH considerable changes took place in the country generally in the reign of Queen Anne, there are probably few matters of local interest to record. The same causes that affected the kingdom, produced in a less degree similar effects on this county.

After an exciting time of civil war the people quietly returned to the more profitable occupations of peace. Literature and the fine arts were developed, and considerable changes (but not improvements) took place in architecture. Yet, as regarded the people, all tended onwards, and the march of improvement was forward. This county was not behind the times. Our men of science and education are known to fame.

The successes of the soldiers and sailors of that day are well known; and this part of the country sent more than its share to the wars, so much so, indeed, that it was called "the nursery of Queen Anne's soldiers." But the Queen's reign, though brilliant, was short; and we now pass on to the time more immediately under consideration.

The accession of King George, and the consequent introduction of many foreign habits and customs into this country, produced a marked effect on the taste of its people. We cannot forget the awfully prim and precise gardens of that age; the poor trees distorted into absurd shapes, or the red brick houses with great white framed windows; nor are we likely to overlook the queer fashions of dress which then had a run. The period may be said to have both an age of gold and an age of lead. Knight says that nothing could be finer than the dresses Vandyke loved to paint: nothing more unnatural or absurd than the costume Kneller was often compelled to draw—we hope without loving it. The ancient beaux and belles of the latter part of the seventeenth century, in peruke and

commode, with snuff-box and fan, taking their evening walk, could comment to children and grandchildren on a hundred varieties of the popular aspect since they were young—since the ladies went abroad in the enormous wheel fardingale, standing collar, and buckram bust of the Elizabethan style, and the gentlemen of the royal household and court in the ungainly stuffed and plaited garments. We may glance at a few of the most conspicuous of these changes, and begin with those of the hair and its appendages. The hair of the ladies was still frizzled and crisped, and tortured into wreaths and borders, and "underpropped with forks, wires," &c. For some time after, the hat, often steeple-crowned, with a round or broad flapping brim, continued to shade the tresses of the middle classes generally. The French hood was long a favourite wear with the puritanical gentlewoman. Then there was the "cap-kercher, and such like," of which Stubbs speaks. A fashionable lady would

Wear a flowing coronet to-day,  
The symbol of her beauty's sad decay;  
To-morrow she a waving plume will try,  
The emblem of all female levity:  
Now in her hat, then in her hair is drest;  
Now, of all fashions she thinks change the best.

But for once there was to be a time when the loveliest ornament bestowed by Nature on the human form was to be set free from unnatural constraint, as far as fashion was concerned. The glossy ringlets of the young gentlewoman drooped to the neck in all their native luxuriance, negligently confined by a simple rose, jewel, or bandeau of pearls; but its reign was too genuinely beautiful not to be brief, so it was succeeded by one of the most extraordinary contrasts conceivable, the tower, or commode, a regularly built-up pile of hair and ornaments. As to the decoration of the gentlemen's heads, it seems that after



frizzing up the hair from the forehead, and suffering it to share in the freedom and luxuriance of that of the other sex, they next thought they would supersede it altogether, and, following the example of the ladies before mentioned, *borrow* their hair. The French gave us also that odious invention, the peruke or periwig—made in imitation of long waving curls. That was not the worst: the picturesque style did not suit the new contrivance; so it was flung aside for the sugar-loaf hat set round about with feathers or ribbons. We leave our reader to judge of the ludicrous effect in the general customs of this reign. The age of full-bottomed wigs, however, had arrived, and the barbers were to fulfil their august mission. It became dangerous to one's intellectual reputation to resist.

As with the hair, so with the dress: there was a time during this century when ladies of fashion were contented to imitate nature. And if the rich flowing train be esteemed an innovation upon what may be called a natural style of costume, it was a very pardonable one.

We cannot stay to dwell on all the other changes that characterized the dresses of the period—as in the

—gandy cloak three mansions' price almost:

or in the vests, coats, and waistcoats, nor shall we attempt to use any other language than the poet's in enumerating the host of articles of wear and ornament that filled the wardrobes or occupied the dressing-tables of the votaries of fashion—the

Chains, coronets, pendants, bracelets, and ear-rings;  
Pins, girdles, spangles, embroideries and rings;  
Shadows, rebatoes, ribands, ruffs, cuffs, falls,  
Scarfs, feathers, fans, masks, muffs, laces, cauls,  
Thin taffanies, cobweb-lawn, and fardingals,  
Sweet falls, veils, wimples, glasses, crimping-pins,  
Pots of ointment, combs, with poking-sticks, and bodkins,  
Coifs, gorgets, fringes, rolls, fillets, and hair-laces.

The muffler, an article of dress at least as ancient as the time of the prophet Isaiah (iii. 19), and in all probability very much older, had not yet ceased to defend the elderly or the delicate English female from the perilous winter cold of our bleak climate. Among the country people, however, it would be more prevalent than in towns.

### Roads and Travellers.

We now pass on to other subjects, which will probably be considered of more importance, as they will bear on the progress of the people generally. An able writer in *Blackwood* has given a graphic account which may prove of interest. Our readers must pardon us if any of the following will seem a repetition; but it must be remembered that though we have advanced in time, in some

matters little or no progress in improvement had been made.

The incidents which mainly determine whether nations are to be accounted civilised or the reverse are the condition of their roads, the state of their agriculture, and the means of transport available, at all times and under everyday contingencies, for the conveyance of goods and of persons from one point within the country to another. Wherever you find these three conditions of social existence in good order, there you may be sure that you are not sojourning with barbarians. There may be no high standard of art and literature among them; their manners, in the common intercourse of life, may be rough; and even in the views which they entertain of moral and religious requirements, you may encounter a good deal which offends your more just perception of what is right. But the people, as a people, are lifted above the line which divides civilisation from barbarism; they have made the first and certainly the most important advances towards national refinement. On the other hand, wherever these three conditions of social existence are in bad order, there, you may depend upon it, you have fallen among a rude people. Their country may have produced great writers, great artists, learned divines, philosophers, and scholars; and luxury may abound in their capital as it abounded long ago in Rome. But the people, as a people, are essentially rude; they have yet the first and most important steps to take in the direction of national refinement.

In respect to roads, we had decidedly fallen far behind the condition in which the Romans left us. The long, straight causeways of that marvellous people, taking no account of levels, but passing sheer from point to point, were all but obliterated; and nothing hard, solid, or fit to bear the pressure of travel, had then, or for centuries before, taken their place. Here and there, indeed, stone blocks, laid down irregularly on the surface of the ground, enabled men and horses to pick their way, even in winter, from one town or village to another. But wherever the old Roman roads were lost in other parts of the country, nothing was brought in to supply their place, and travelling became, in consequence, not only difficult and dangerous, but well-nigh impossible.

It is not our business to describe in detail how feeble were the attempts made long ago by legislation and royal authority to correct this evil. A law had been passed directing the bushes and trees to be cleared away from either side of the highways, to a distance of two hundred feet, for the avowed purpose of preventing robbers from lying in ambush. In some neighbourhoods where the soil was sandy, successive generations of men and horses cut

down the paths here and there to a depth of many feet below the surface—one of which, by the bye, still existing and known as Holloway, tells its own story, even though in part the hollow has been filled in.

And thus things continued with very little improvement down to the middle of the eighteenth century. Nor in the towns were the streets themselves in a much better plight. Open kennels ran in the middle of them, which, when the rain came down, flooded them altogether, leaving on the subsidence of the waters a sea of mud, through which (for there were no sideways or flagstones) passengers on foot had to pick their way, and to pick it after nightfall in the dark, for street-lamps there were none.

Over roads of this description the only practicable mode of travelling was on foot or on horseback. The poor walked, the rich rode. The judges rode the circuits, and the bar walked or rode, according as their circumstances authorised. Ladies sat on pillions, with their arms round the gentlemen or serving-men who rode before them. The horse-litter conveyed ladies who were too delicate to go through a journey on horseback, and the pillion did service with the more robust.

Corn and wool went to market in creels. Manure was carried to the fields in the same way; and in the same way moss or forest fuel was conveyed to towns, villages, and private houses. Even the little coal which was used in the southern counties could only be transported in panniers from the seashore or navigable rivers inland. In a country so circumstanced it was out of the question that manufactures of any kind could flourish. For example, a hundred and fifty years ago vessels of wood, pewter, and even of leather, formed the chief part of the household and table utensils in opulent families. Clothing, glass, "delft," cutlery, paper, even hats, all came from France, Germany, and Holland; and most of these, like plate in silver and gold, were in common use only among the titled and untitled nobility.

Nobody thought, indeed, a hundred years ago of setting out upon a journey, whether he travelled by coach or on horseback, without getting his firearms ready; and the circumstance of having used them effectively, and beaten off or killed a robber, gained for a gentleman almost as proud a name as the soldier acquires now by winning the Victoria Cross. The following story of John, Earl Berkeley, is not new, but we give it as well illustrating the manners of the times of which we are writing.

Lord Berkeley, it appears, had often expressed his surprise at the success with which the noted highwaymen of the day carried on their operations. He especially blamed gentlemen who gave up their purses, except when

attacked by superior numbers, and said that he should be ashamed to appear in public if ever he allowed himself to be robbed by a single highwayman. The knights of the road, as they called themselves and were called by others, appear to have possessed one of the qualities which are essential to make up the character of a great commander. Their intelligence was excellent, and the speeches of Lord Berkeley soon got abroad among them. These touched their honour, and it was determined that the earliest possible opportunity should be taken of compelling the boastful peer to eat his words. Accordingly, when he was crossing Hounslow Heath one night in his carriage, he was suddenly roused from a slumber into which he had fallen by finding that the carriage was stopped, and that a strange face looked in upon him through the window, while a pistol was presented at his breast. "So, my lord," said the face, "I have you now. You have often boasted that you would not be robbed. Deliver, or take this." "No more I would," replied Lord Berkeley coolly, at the same time putting his hand into his pocket as if to find his purse, "if it were not for that fellow peeping over your shoulder." The highwayman turned round to look: it was a false move; Lord Berkeley drew out, not his purse, but a pistol, and shot the man dead on the spot.

### The Travelling Traders.

With roads in this state, and the means of intercommunication so scanty, the inhabitants of one town and one district in England knew next to nothing of the inhabitants of another, though separated from them, it might be by only twenty or thirty miles. Whatever people learned respecting their neighbours was gathered from the pedlars or packmen, who were the merchants of the day, and conveyed from place to place news as well as goods; for shops were rare even in towns of considerable size, and had no existence at all in smaller towns and villages. From these hawkers the mistress of the house was accustomed to provide herself with finery—ribbons, lace, and such like. All the necessaries for home usage were provided at home.

### Country Habits.

The wool clipped from the master's sheep was carded by the master's servants. The flax, steeped and worked up, was, as well as the worsted, spun; and the thread taken charge of by a handloom-weaver on the estate, or perhaps sent to some neighbouring town or village, came back in due time fit to pass through the hands of the thrifty domestic seamstress or the travelling tailor. In like manner English housekeepers were accustomed, less than

a century ago, to lay up in the autumn such a stock of provisions as would suffice for the winter's consumption. Sheep and oxen slaughtered and salted down, with stores of wheat, barley, malt, spices, salt, honey, and savoury herbs, stocked the larder and the store-room of the rich. The poor were content if, in addition to their meal, they could lay in a supply of salted herrings. Those were the days of fairs, great and small—some chartered, some held by custom only—to which people of all ranks and conditions repaired, in order to provide themselves from time to time with such articles of luxury as neither the travelling merchant nor the neighbouring market town could supply. At these fairs the squires and yeomen bought and sold the produce of their farms. There, too, the hiring of servants took place; and side by side with traffic went on sports of all kinds—merryandrews, jugglers, quack doctors, and what not, keeping the country people in a roar, and gathering in their small coin. Of the greater fairs, not a few were given up to special business.

Such was the state of England when George III. came to the throne, as regards two of those three conditions of social life which enable us to judge, at first sight, respecting the comparative barbarism of nations. The roads were of the worst possible description. The means of conveyance between place and place were defective in the extreme. With respect to the third—the state of English agriculture, and the condition of the classes by which it was practised—in these points the picture which meets our gaze is scarcely more cheering. Drainage may be said to have been a thing unknown. The courage and skill of our remote ancestors had, indeed, at periods too far removed from us to come within the province of history, constructed here and there vast mounds for damming out the sea and keeping rivers and even estuaries within certain circumscribed limits. And where this waste of waters happened not to be, lack of skill prevented the English husbandman from applying the lands which they owned or occupied to tillage. Hence Warburton, the author of the "*Vallum Romanum*," in giving the impression which was made upon him, says, "Such was the wild and barren state of the country at the time I made my survey, that in those parts now called the wastes, and heretofore the debatable ground, I have frequently discovered the vestiges of towns and camps that seemed never to have been trod upon by any human creature but myself since the Romans abandoned them; the traces of streets and the foundations of the buildings being still visible, only grown over with grass."

While drainage was so little practised, and roads all but impassable, the produce of the fields of England could not

be other than scanty. Wheat, barley and oats were raised in small quantities. Turnips, though sown and reared in gardens, never became a crop in any sense of the term till some time between 1760 and 1770; and even at the latter period only the most scientific of agriculturists grew them. As to artificial grasses—such as sainfoin, vetches, and even clover—these, with the exception of the latter, had never been heard of.

The people who thus practised the art of agriculture were, as might be expected, rude in the extreme. Schools there were none in the rural parishes; and even in small towns, except where King Edward's foundations happened to be, such schools as existed taught but little, and few came to profit by that little. The clergy did not appear to consider that upon them the people had any further claim than for the hasty and slovenly performance of the public services of the Church. Of the bishops appointed since the Revolution of 1688, several were indeed learned men; but their learning, and the exercise of it through the press, engrossed all their attention. The great majority could not even claim to be scholars; and whether scholars or not they all alike lived and died profoundly indifferent, or apparently so, to their proper duties.

Mrs. Hannah More (known in her day as the female bishop of the Mendips), describing a visit which she paid to a village of Somersetshire, says—"We found more than 200 people in the parish, almost all very poor; no gentry; a dozen wealthy farmers, hard, brutal, and ignorant. . . . We saw but one Bible in all the parish, and that was used to prop up a flower-pot." Another witness, William Huntington, the well-known "Sinner Saved," thus delivers himself in his "*Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer*," concerning the profound ignorance which prevailed when he was a boy. His book appeared in 1793, and he was then a man advanced beyond middle life:—"There was in the village (where he lived) an exciseman of a stern and hard-favoured countenance, whom I took notice of for having a stick covered with figures, and an ink-bottle hanging at his button-hole. This man I imagined to be employed by God Almighty to take an account of children's sins. I thought he must have a great deal to do to find out the sins of children; and I eyed him as a formidable being, and the greatest enemy I had in the world." We doubt whether there could be found at this day, or even forty years ago, a child, far less a grown lad, so ignorant as to take Mr. Huntington's view of an exciseman and his ink-bottle.

It was while George III. filled the throne that the first beginnings were made to break in upon this state of pitiable darkness. Miss Hannah Bell first thought of

gathering together and instructing the children of the poor whom she saw, Sunday after Sunday, driven by the beadle out of the churchyard. Her benevolent efforts were attended with marked success, and the fame of them stirred up Mr. Raikes to do likewise. Such was the little fountain-head whence, in due time, broke out those waters which are now fertilising, under the superintendence of the National Societies, the length and breadth of England. Nor would it be just to the memory of the good old King were we, in observing upon these matters, to leave unnoticed the part which he personally took in promoting this righteous end. George III. was the friend of Bishop Porteous, and of every good work which Bishop Porteous took up. He rejoiced in the spread of Sunday-schools, and desired that every one of his subjects might possess, and be able to read, a Bible. He was a zealous promoter, also, of improvements in agriculture. Besides experimenting on his own lands, he corresponded, under the signature of "Ralph the Farmer," with Arthur Young, the well-known traveller and editor of the *Agricultural Journal*. He was an admirer, also, of Adam Smith's great work, and did much to promote the study of the subject of which it treats. How well directed the King's energies were it is hardly necessary to point out. Scientific agriculture became a fashion, and that race of improvement began, both in England and in Scotland, which has ever since been going on. The results are before us.

### Canals.

Up to the year 1760 there was only one canal in the country, if the deepening of the Sanky Brook can be spoken of as a canal. It passed through a district where no obstructions presented themselves, and as far as it went—only a few miles—conferred vast benefits on the district. But everywhere else, roads impassable except to pack-horses in winter, or in the height of summer to heavy waggons, put quite beyond the reach of the seats of England's infant industry the means of going forward in the way of improvement. In this year the idea presented itself to Francis, third Duke of Bridgwater, of attempting to do on a large scale what the deepeners of Sanky Brook had done on a small.

Others followed, which it is not necessary to particularise here, till by-and-bye between each populous English town, and almost all the rest, whether inland or on the seaboard, easy and inexpensive means of communication by water were provided. Forthwith the riches which had heretofore lain in the bowels of the earth were exhumed. Not coal only, but iron and lead, and whatever else could be applied to the convenience of human life, became as

accessible to the dwellers in every wayside village as to occupants of large towns; and the impulse thereby given to other industries than that of the loom began to make itself felt.

### The Scene Changes.

About this period a greater change took place in West Somerset than had ever before occurred. Up to this time in each of the towns, and even villages, a brisk and successful trade in the manufacture of cloth, serges, blankets, or other woollen goods, had been carried on. So long as water was the great motive power, Somersetshire was a manufacturing county; but now coal became common from the introduction of canals. The steam-engine followed. The manufacturers removed to localities where coal was abundant, and Somersetshire became an agricultural rather than a manufacturing county.

### Description of the Country.

Without means of intercommunication between the interior and the coast, and between one town and another, the people could command neither foreign commerce nor domestic trade. The population was sparse, but some employed in manufactures. The manners of the humbler classes were rude, and the fare indifferent. Where the richest crops of corn are now reared, enormous swamps spread themselves out; and for lack of bridges, rivers were impassable, or passable only by fords and ferries. The Rev. James Brown published, in 1726, "Three Years' Travel in England, Scotland, and Wales." We read the work at this day as we would the details of a journey into the heart of Africa, or across the continent of America, so perilous are the adventures which the brave ecclesiastic encountered, and so determined the energy which carried him through them all. He could not move from place to place except under the care of trustworthy guides; and as soon as the winter set in, and occasionally when heavy rains fell in summer, he suspended his operations, and established himself, wherever he might be, till better times came. In 1820, when the old King died, the roads of England were the best in the world. Coaches, beautifully horsed, and well appointed in every respect, ran over them, summer and winter, at an average rate of ten miles in the hour. The whole island was intersected with canals. Not a river or small stream, except in remote and out-of-the-way districts, lacked its bridges; and fens were drained and heaths cleared away. As to the trade of the country, foreign and domestic, it had become a marvel in men's eyes, as it might well be.

### Society.

The habits of fashionable ladies and gentlemen in private life were such as now surprise, almost as much as they offend, our better tastes. Education in the female sex was sadly neglected, and before marriage girls learned little except to embroider, to cook and to dress. They usually married—we speak of the upper ten thousand—for rank or wealth, and thenceforth gave up their time to intrigue. They played high even at Court. They could not always spell or write correctly a common note. Sunday was the great day for their entertainments. Their religion consisted in occasionally showing themselves at church; and their wit found vent in indelicate innuendoes. Honourable exceptions to this rule there doubtless were; but the rule was general, well-nigh to universality.

Among men, and especially men of fashion, to be profligate, drunken, given to play, and profane, was not only not discreditable, but quite correct. The club-houses were the scenes night after night of orgies which would not now be tolerated in the worst-conducted gin-shop. Duels were events of constant occurrence, to which, no doubt, the barbarous custom of wearing swords greatly contributed. And he who could boast of having betrayed the largest number of women was received with the greatest favour in all circles.

Hogarth's "Rake's Progress" tells a tale which, in all except its finale, had more of historical truth than of fiction in it a century ago. Nor were the manners and morals of the squirearchy and even the clergy much more elevated. Drunkenness was regarded as a necessary incident on hospitality. The country gentleman who allowed his guests to leave the dinner-table except in a state of elevation would have been despised as a screw: he was the best fellow who saw them all first gorged with meat and wine and then put to bed. As to the clergy, their habits continued to be pretty much what they learned to make them when students. Even the fellows' common room, and not unfrequently the master's lodge, taught them anything rather than the graces of sobriety. In a word, the age was a drunken age, a profligate age, an age either of daring profanity or indifference to religion—of coarse talk, coarse manners, and the worst possible morals. Exceptions there doubtless were both in town and country to the general rule.

It would carry us far beyond the purpose of the present work were we to speak at any length respecting the condition in this country of literature and the arts in the age of which we are now writing. As has been previously observed, it is not from the state of its literature that we

can determine the comparative civilisation or barbarism of a nation. •

### Literature, &c.

There were throughout the whole of the corporation towns of England only twenty-eight printing-houses established. As to circulating libraries, such things began to be only in 1761; and in 1782 the provincial newspapers existing in England amounted to fifty, and no more. Nor is all this to be wondered at in a country which could boast of no schools except such as benevolent individuals had here and there founded: for when among the people at large the art of reading is unknown, who would ever think of accumulating printing-presses or multiplying circulating libraries and journals? Of English literature, therefore, as an instrument for training the English mind, or creating among the English people pure tastes and lofty aspirations, we are scarcely going too far when we say that when George III. ascended the throne it had no existence. Great authors there doubtless were whose works told within a circle comparatively narrow. But so far as the bulk of the people were concerned, whether in town or country, they might almost as well have had no existence. They were not read, or if read, they could not have been appreciated.

Art has always been, even more decidedly than literature, a very unsafe test to apply when we are considering the point at which, in social improvement, people have arrived. But the extent to which artists are honoured, and their works held in esteem by the rich and noble, enables us to draw a just estimate in regard to the comparative refinement of society in its upper grades.

In 1760 the state of our prisons was frightful, and the law, not criminal only, but of debtor and creditor likewise, absolutely savage. In the interval the Church had reformed itself, and profligate parsons were become as rare as their opposites had been when the cycle began. Schools were springing up likewise in every parish. Under their influence the working classes lost by degrees their brutality, and society in its upper ranks purified itself.

### Review of Local Matters.

We observed at the commencement of this paper that since the Civil Wars we had no local matter of great celebrity to record; but the conquests and progress of peace are really more permanent and important than those of war. We therefore propose to take a short review of those changes that took place during the period now under consideration. We shall find that during the Georgian

era a large number of local Acts of Parliament were passed which greatly benefitted this neighbourhood, and tended more than any other means to dispel the darkness, and to forward progress and improvement in this locality. A large quantity of waste land was reclaimed, and the hills and open country were cultivated. A real commencement was made towards the drainage of the moors and other swampy districts.

The Parrett was improved, and the Tone made navigable; our roads, taken under the management of trustees, were macadamised and rendered fit for travelling; canals were projected and constructed; the silk and lace trades were introduced, to take the place of the woollen, which we had lost. Various towns in this neighbourhood obtained their Acts, and established or increased their markets; although in war times trade generally flourished, and the people were doing well. As to literature, there was an increased demand for books and papers. In fact, it may almost be said that, as far as this county was concerned, newspapers were then started, and the Press and its mighty influence became felt. The people demanded lights for their streets; oil-lamps, and afterwards gas, came into

use. As regards architecture, we must admit that it was the darkest of the dark ages. Few churches were erected, and those few were fearful; and if such must be said of the churches, what shall be said of the numerous chapels that sprung up under the stirring influence of Wesley and Whitfield? These men were in earnest, and did much to impart a spirit of life into the Church of England, which had fallen into a woful state of indifference and sloth. Missionary societies were established; the Taunton and Somerset Hospital and other similar institutions founded. Sunday Schools were commenced, and Reading Societies established. And all these improvements took place during the time the country was engaged in most expensive and ruinous wars—wars which, although they established a great name in the world for Britain and her sons, yet made her many enemies, and increased the national debt to such an extent that every man to this day feels the heavy burden.

It will thus be seen that considerable progress had been made. Civilisation had been spread, and morality and religion increased.



# West Somerset.

## The Nineteenth Century.



We trust that the picture sketched of the habits and customs of our forefathers may have interested our readers. If so, probably the close of the account (in which a comparison between the past and the present can be made) may prove more so.

Among a mass of interesting matter, Knight well describes the times lately passed away. We therefore propose to make some few extracts from his entertaining and instructive work.

### The People.

The Englishman of the past was in many respects a very different being from the Englishman of the present day. With the same patriotism, the same love of home and of order, the same religious faith, and, to a great extent, the same political predilections as our forefathers—we have no longer the same modes of life, the same habits of thought and sympathy, and the same bigoted adherence to old and established customs which characterised them. The generation of to-day lives ten or twelve years longer in the world than the generation of a century back, and it lives more in a single year than some generations who have been long dead and gone lived in their whole lives. The population, as it has grown more numerous, has in the ratio of its increase become more capable and efficient in all the arts of living; because with increase of numbers came the necessity for increased exertion and for co-operation and competition in the various branches of industry that sustain life. Science, arts manufactures, invention and discovery, have each and all made such prodigious strides within the

past few years, and have effected such wonderful changes both in the face of the country and the habits of the people, that, at a superficial glance, all versimilitude between the soil and the race of our time and those of a century back would seem to have vanished; and we must look deeper than the surface of things to recognise the identity of principle and purpose which proclaims them of one common stock. The impossibilities of our forefathers are the matter-of-fact of to-day. We live in a world of wonders which habit has familiarised to us, but which, barely to have foretold a hundred, or even fifty years ago, would have drawn down upon the rash prophet the ridicule and mockery of his fellow-men, and have subjected him to public scorn, if not to the compassionate care of a lunatic asylum.

It is difficult at the present moment to realise anything like a true picture of private and domestic life and manners, among the trading and lower classes especially, during the middle and latter part of the last century. It is only by contrast with the present condition of society that a satisfactory estimate can be formed of the real difference between the peoples, their pursuits, plans, and purposes, of the two epochs. Viewed socially, the chasm is broader and deeper between the present date and that of a century back than would be found to exist in any period of five times the duration in our past history. It is our intention to attempt, as far as our limits will allow, to bridge over this chasm, and connect as closely as may be the present era with the past. We are necessarily restricted by the small space that remains open for the purpose from any comprehensive view of the subject, and must therefore resort to a somewhat summary

process. Of matters political and legislative we can take but small notice; and there is, in fact, no need that we should trench upon the functions of the historian in this department, seeing that there is no lack of popular works on such subjects. What we propose doing is, to narrate briefly the rise, progress, and application of the great inventions and discoveries of this latter era, which, themselves the offspring of human necessities, have proved the grand means of social amelioration and advancement—to glance at the progress of art and literature, and the means available for their universal diffusion—and to suggest the connection and correspondence which ever must exist between the progress of science and invention, the spread of letters and the fine arts, and the progress towards the complete civilisation and happiness of the human family.

### The Steam-Engine.

Foremost in the list of inventions by which mankind has profited stands the steam-engine. It is the one invention which has given birth to a thousand others; it is the vital principle of our machinery and manufactures; and is at once the Titanic power which achieves the mightiest labours, and the docile servant obedient to the feeblest hand. By steam we plough the stormy billows in the teeth of opposing winds, and bring together the uttermost parts of the earth; by steam we delve the mine, raise the hidden ore to the surface, blast it in the furnace, and weld the glowing masses to purposes of utility; and by steam, if need be, we grind a pin, or polish a needle's point. There is hardly a purpose in the domain of industry to which it may not be applied; and there is scarcely a spot to be found, where labour is the business of life, in which the steam-engine in some form other is not the motive power.

The history of the steam-engine during the last half-century—its various modifications, improvements, and applications—would occupy, and indeed has occupied, several volumes; and even a glance at that history would necessitate the entering into details foreign to our purpose. The steam-engine exists at present in every variety of form, and does the chief part of the work of the world; but in whatever shape it is found, its construction is based upon the principles which the genius of Watt eliminated and brought into practical working.

### Railways.

Among the numerous contributions to progress and civilisation, there are none of greater moment than the railway system. We therefore annex a short ac-

count of such railroads as have affected the West of England.

As we propose to devote a separate chapter to this subject, our present review will be but brief. It will probably surprise our readers when we inform them that at the reading rooms of the Taunton and Somerset Institution may be seen an old volume of the weekly numbers of the *Taunton Courier*, and in that of the year 1825 may be read an account of a meeting held at Taunton for the purpose of forming a company to cut a railway from Taunton to Bristol. It will be remembered, on reflection, that this was years before there was a railway in England, except the tramways at the various collieries. We need hardly add that this plucky proposal was not then carried out.

The earliest form in which the railway existed was that of the tramroads used as approaches to mines, quarries, and collieries. The first tramroads were merely planks of wood laid upon sleepers, in order to keep the wheels of carts and waggons out of the soft mud. These were followed, at first, by sheets of iron, then by a species of iron gutter made to receive the wheels and retain them in the right track, and then by raised iron rails, having a flange on one side to confine the wheel. The flange was afterwards transferred from the rail to the wheel of the carriage, an improvement which was first adopted about the year 1801, and has continued in use ever since. On the first railway, or rather tramway, carriages were drawn by animal power.

The Great Western Railway was among the earliest promoted. The Bristol and Exeter branched from it at its terminus at Bristol, and was cut between the years 1840 and 1846. Small branches, as the Yeovil, the Watchet and the Chard, sprung from the main line.

As year after year passed away, that vast reticulation of railways which now overspreads the whole face of the land like a net came gradually into being. Their construction gave birth to a new class of officials, of working labourers, and of manufactured material, and at the same time tended more to modify the manners and customs of Englishmen than any other event of modern times. The facilities of intercourse have multiplied the amount of travelling nearly a hundredfold within the last thirty years, and the result has been a general diffusion of that species of information and knowledge of the world which travelling universally imparts. Old prejudices have been swept away, a liberal and cosmopolitan spirit has to a large extent displaced the old local jealousies—freedom of intermixture has broken down the ancient bigotries, and the way is left clear for the march of improvement.



We can now traverse the kingdom from one end to the other in a day; we can transact business in an unlimited market; we can visit all that is worthy of observation at a low cost both of money and time, and can renew as often as we please the pleasures of social intercourse with absent friends.

### The Electric Telegraph.

Of all the advantages derived from a knowledge of the subtle electric medium, there is none that will bear comparison with the electric telegraph. That a man should be able to converse instantaneously with a friend, at a hundred or a thousand miles distance, and separated from him by barren wastes or rolling seas, seems at the first blush a notion so absurd as to harmonise only with the dreams of a lunatic. Yet this seeming impossibility is actually taking place in numberless instances even while we write—for the electric telegraph has become a common medium of communication, and among commercial men is already regarded but as a quicker and rather more expensive kind of post-office.

Though the cost of an electric telegraph traversing a long distance is necessarily great, yet, from the rapidity with which its work is accomplished when the apparatus is complete, the charge for the transmission of messages or news is so moderate as to be within the reach of all classes. A despatch of a few words may be sent a hundred miles for a shilling, and every day in the year thousands of such despatches flash along the wires. At a still cheaper rate, proportionately, is the telegraph available for reports of a more lengthy nature; so that, during the sessions of Parliament, the proceedings of the Houses in London are sent flying along the wires as fast as they take place, and are published to the extent of whole columns in the far distant counties simultaneously with their publication in the columns of the *Times*.

### Gas Light.

A hundred years ago the streets were lighted for the most part by the individual efforts of the housekeepers, kept up to the duty by the night watchmen, who, when the dark nights of winter set in, called for a "whole candle" to be set up in a front window, and thundered at the door of any house that was slow to display it, threatening fine and penalty in case of non-compliance. In 1760, or thereabouts, began the system of lighting with oil lamps—a plan which endured until 1815 and after, and which most residents approaching the age of fifty must remember perfectly well. These lamps exhibited only a minute spark suspended in a round glass pot, and barely

served the purpose of defining the outlines of the several streets.

Between the years 1820 and 1830 the old oil lamps almost entirely disappeared from the streets, and in lieu of the blinking darkness of the old days a brilliant light, sufficient for all the purposes of traffic, illumined the public ways. The introduction of gas in private houses and shops was not so rapid. Owing to inexperience in applying the necessary fittings, and carelessness in the management, numerous accidents and some fatal explosions took place, which had the effect of retarding its general spread. These obstacles to its usefulness were, however, removed when the nature of the subtle material became better understood, and the demand for more gas was heard on all sides. New companies arose, and as competition came into play the gas fell in price, and, from its superior cheapness and excellence as an illuminating power, gradually made its way wherever there was the means of its introduction.

### Agriculture.

The improvements in agriculture demand especial notice. Our grandfathers were content to "plough and sow, and reap and mow," on the old routine principle which had sufficed to feed the population for a thousand years. We have grown so numerous that we should starve if we now acted on that principle. Our additional population want additional food, and must have it; and though we derive a large quantity from foreign markets, we are, and ever shall be, mainly dependent on our home growth. To increase the home produce, therefore, is now, and has been for many years past, the grand aim of the agriculturist. The introduction of guano showed the possibility of stimulating production to a point it had never yet reached; and this conviction once fairly entertained, there was no lack of energy on the part of those whose interest it was to make the most of their land, in the prosecution of new systems of cultivation. Draining, sub-soiling, levelling of fences, and the enclosure or tillage of wastes, brought fresh land under the plough, and the introduction of new implements of husbandry, and steam machinery, and additional capital, has made or is making the whole soil of the country doubly productive. The abolition of protective duties, which threw the farmer on his own resources, has taught him to know the true value of them, and he is richer and more independent at the present moment than he was in the days of the sliding scale or a fixed duty; and for the wealth he now enjoys he is indebted to his own industry—not to an obnoxious law. He has invested his gains cheerfully in the mechanical means for largely in-

creasing them, and has now at hand every appliance which the mechanical arts can afford him for abbreviating labour and rendering it more profitable.

### Buildings and Architecture.

The eighteenth century was not distinguished by many remarkable works of architectural merit in this country; on the contrary, that century has been regarded as a period of decline in architecture. The style of building generally adopted was the Italianized Grecian, a tame and spiritless style, as much opposed to our naturally robust habits and predilections as it is ill adapted to our northern climate. The unfortunate preference for this pseudo-classical mixture continued to prevail in this country to a large and mischievous extent down almost to our own day. Happily, the partisans of a better taste and more correct style have never been quite extinct, and their influence has latterly taken the lead in reference especially to our newer ecclesiastical edifices. The Gothic style, corrupted it is true by the admixture of modern prettinesses to mask the absence of true artistic skill, has revived, and bids fair again to supplant all other modes of architecture for religious purposes; and this revival has not been without its effect even upon the fanatics for Grecian pillars and pediments, who have latterly been led to adopt a model more correctly Grecian, yet modified to meet the necessities of our climate.

### Money Matters.

For some years following the reign of the Georges, the industrial enterprise of England prospered, favoured as it was by the peace and by the consequent increase of her commerce in all parts of the world—favoured also by the spirit of invention and discovery, whose triumphs we have endeavoured briefly to record. The agricultural interest was satisfied because corn maintained, amidst constant fluctuations, a price which, on the average, was more than remunerative. The manufacturing interest was buoyant because, although the power of supply was rapidly increasing with every year and every month, it yet failed to overtake the demand, and prices remained steady under a rate of production which had no parallel in former eras; and the populace were satisfied, or at least were prevented from insisting on their grievances, by the fact that employment was plentiful, at a fair rate of wages. The continued prosperity, as is always the case with a commercial community, stimulated enterprise, which, not finding for itself a sufficient sphere of action in the old and beaten paths, began to diverge into wide and unknown

spheres of speculation. Men, not knowing what to do with their capital, and in a hurry to increase its amount, devised new schemes and plunged into them with a recklessness which shut out calculation and reflection. Joint-stock companies grew and multiplied, and associations of sober individuals were seen unitedly prosecuting the maddest projects, which either one of them singly would have denounced as hopelessly absurd. Rogues, knaves and swindlers, who had nothing, not even character, to lose, wormed or crushed themselves into the management of the new concerns, and they alone profited by them in the end. The banks and the government stock offered but a low rate of interest—the new companies offered more than double, and professed to guarantee the dividends. The consequence was that thousands invested their whole fortunes in these fallacious bubbles, which were to burst too soon, and involve their credulous victims in ruin. The inevitable result of all this insanity came at last in many panics and crashes.

### The Penny Post.

In the latter part of 1839 the House of Commons, at the instigation of Mr. Rowland Hill, decreed the trial of a new system of postage, by which the old rates of 6d., 9d., 1s. and so on per letter, were reduced to an uniform charge of one penny. To give the post-office time to prepare for so great a change, a fourpenny rate was charged for a few weeks; but on the 10th of January, 1840, the penny scheme was tried. How complete has been the success of this plan we all know, and what a boon it has proved to every individual in the country. It is, we think, undeniable that this single measure, in regard to its social importance, outweighs any other, we might almost say all others, that have been adopted in our time. It has certainly done more for commerce than anything commerce has been able to achieve for itself. It has probably done more for education than ten thousand schools would have accomplished in the same time; and, by cementing and increasing social and friendly relations, it has had a moral effect upon the whole population which has raised them prodigiously in the moral scale. It was the one thing wanting to make of our home one vast domestic institution, and in connection with the rapid transition by railways, and the instantaneous communication by the electric wires, for which it prepared the way, has done all that could be done towards combining in one family the entire British race.

### Arts and Manufactures.

Considerable advancement has been made within the few past years in the above. Many articles now of every-

day use even with the peasant were but a few years ago dainties and luxuries to the higher classes. The masses can now participate in many of the pleasures and advantages of music, drawing and other accomplishments, to which, until lately, they had no access. These advantages are offered by the new schools of art and the people's concerts, &c. Among the manufactures, no invention probably so soon worked a complete change as the introduction of the little lucifer match, in lieu of the old flint and steel. The new wonderful art of photography enables even the poorest to possess a memento of those they love, while to the classes in a higher position it offers numerous novel and beautiful attractions. The introduction of good window glass, and especially of plate, has worked a wonderful change in the appearance and comfort of our shops and houses; while the mighty wonders of the printing press, with the duty off paper, contribute to give to all classes the pleasure and advantages of cheap and readable books and periodicals.

### General Changes.

The Reform Bill and the Representation of the People's Bill have conferred the privilege and obligations of the franchise on those who never before possessed it, and enables them to exercise a powerful voice in the government of the country. The numerous laws that have been passed at various times respecting the relief of the poor have certainly done much to soften the pillow of poverty, although there is room for still greater improvement. Nor must we forget the care now taken of prisoners, children, and lunatics. The method in which they are generally treated is a very great contrast to the conduct of a previous century. The Act of Parliament embodying the Rural Constabulary, or County Police as they are now generally called, has done much to establish a sense of security of life and property, so necessary for the spread and improvement of the wealth and industry of the people. The enrolment of the Militia and Volunteer forces, with the occasional duty rendered by the Yeomanry, has still further promoted this desirable object. Nor in the march of improvement must we forget the benefits conferred by the Taunton and Somerset Hospital, and of similar though smaller institutions in this part of the county, wherein suffering humanity is kindly and carefully tended. Nor should we forget the immense advance made within the past few years, especially in West Somerset, in the repair and restoration of the fine old churches for which this county is so celebrated, nor the contrast in the various services to the cold affair of past times; neither

should we overlook the discontinuance of burials in our towns, and the establishment of cemeteries. All these great and wonderful changes have taken place within the recollection of the present age.

### Climate, &c.

Considered as a whole, few counties present more varied beauty of outline or general surface than Somerset; and in these respects, perhaps, each district has its own peculiar characteristics, which, as well as its more local divisions, will be more appropriately described under its respective name. The central parts of the county contain the greatest extent of level country; but even here, except in some fenny or marshy districts, the surface is agreeably diversified. The western and northern parts are more varied and mountainous, while particular districts, especially around Wiveliscombe, and many of the higher parts, assume an aspect of hilly grandeur.

Few counties are so much affected as Somerset by instability of climate. This has been ascribed in a great measure to its position, which exposes it to the variety occasioned by the union of the dry winds with the vapour that arises from the sea. More inconvenience is experienced from cold than from heat. Winter prevails over summer, and in several parts may be said to maintain its sway for seven or eight months in the year. The extreme high temperature generally occurs in July or the beginning of August; and that of cold in January or February.

### Soil.

The soil of Somerset is scarcely less diversified than its surface or its climate. In some parts clay and strong loams generally prevail, and in several places extend to a considerable elevation up the sides of the hills. In some of the hills sand abounds, while in others, especially towards the eastern part, fenny grounds occupy wide tracts, while peat, earth and rock divide the higher regions. The soil may therefore be said to include all varieties, from the stiffest clay to sand, and from the deep and fertile loam to peat.

### Produce.

Wheat is the most important agricultural produce, and is most extensively cultivated. Rye is less grown than formerly, but is still cultivated in some of the dry and sandy soils or elevated districts. The best barley and oats are cultivated in all the northern parts. Beans in most of the strong soils, and peas in the dry or gravelly parts. Tares, clover and sainfoin, are widely diffused. Potatoes are

grown in all parts. Turnips have now become a general crop, and have, in many districts, in a great measure supplanted the old system of fallow. Hemp and flax are grown in some places, and hops were peculiar to others. A variety of small seeds are likewise cultivated in particular tracts. Various kind of fruit are diffused over the whole of the county; and horticulture is made a particular study. The adaptation of the soil and climate in most parts to the growth of timber is strongly evinced by the state of the woods and plantations. The principal timber trees in this county are the oak, ash, elm, lime, beech, chestnut, sycamore, birch, alder and poplar. The oak surpasses that of most other countries in strength and durability—qualities that have contributed greatly to the superiority of the English navy.

### Minerals.

Iron is extensively diffused over many of the western and northern parts. Lead is also obtained in a small variety of places in the same regions. Copper is found in the Quantock Hills. Coal and slate appear in the neighbourhoods of Wiveliscombe and Ashbrittle.

### A Concise Review.

Let us now, in a few brief words, draw the reader's attention to the most salient points of contrast between the state of society in our own day and that of the past. We need not look far for the elements of comparison, which are sufficiently obvious whichever way we turn. Our forefathers came into the world in a scene of riotous hubbub; they were brought up in the midst of a noisy mob, who made the streets the arena of their quarrels and diversions, and held, when they pleased, exclusive possession of the public ways. When sober people went abroad at night they needed the link-boy for a guide, and their men-servants for a body-guard; *we*, on the other hand, have clean and orderly thoroughfares, tranquil by day under the charge of the police, brilliantly illuminated by

night, and safe from violence and tumult at all hours. When our forefathers travelled, it was by slow and painful stages, over rough, sloughy roads, which made the journey a real peril, independent of the assaults of the highwayman who watched for their coming; *we* fly along the iron road on the wings of steam, and traverse the whole kingdom in a day without a thought of interruption. When they corresponded, they waited the tardy return of the post, whom floods or bad roads delayed, or the knights of the road plundered; and they paid a high price for postage, which acted as a prohibition to intercourse; *we* send letters five hundred miles for a penny, and get a reply on the morrow; or, not choosing to wait so long as that, communicate instantaneously by the electric wire. When their wives went to market, they had to chaffer in the rain and mire for provisions tumbled in heaps on the ground; *we* build good markets, and purchase at leisure from plentiful stores. If our grandsires saw a lion or an elephant, the sight was food for wonder to the end of their days; *we* can walk at leisure amid specimens of natural history from all parts of the globe, and may be familiar, if *we* choose, with everything that crawls, runs, swims, or flies. When they wanted books they paid for them, to the few publishers of the day, a price which made literature almost a forbidden luxury; *we* find in competition a guarantee for cheapness, and can enjoy the luxury without anxiety about the cost. When they fell under the hands of the surgeon they writhed in anguish beneath the knife; *we* dispel pain by chloroform, and escape the agony of surgical operations. When they died they were buried in crowded churchyards; *we* carry our dead to cemeteries in suburban gardens, and lay them to rest beneath pendant foliage and amidst the sweet odours of flowers. Thus, from the cradle to the grave, the march of social amelioration has compassed us around—and, so far as the material elements of happiness and enjoyment are concerned, *we* are infinitely richer than they. Are *we* really happier, wiser, and better? That, after all, is the grand question—which *we* shall leave each of our readers to ponder for himself.



# West Somerset.

## A General Description.



TAINT old Fuller represents the various counties of England as different parts of a mansion and estate, and compares Cornwall to the porch, Devonshire to the hall, *Somersetshire to the summer parlour*, Cambridgeshire to the chapel, Northumberland to the coal-house, &c., &c.

Somersetshire contains 1,645 square miles, 1,047,220 acres, 474 parishes. The population in 1831 was 403,795; increase per cent. from 1831 to 1841, *eight*. Population in 1841, 435,599, increase per cent. from 1841 to 1851, *two*. Population in 1851, 443,916. Criminal convictions in 1840, 766; in 1844, 711; in 1848, 633. Population per square mile, 269.

It ranks seventh in size, and eighth in population among the counties of the kingdom. The parallel of 50 deg. of North latitude passes through the centre of the county, near the town of Glastonbury; and it lies between 2 deg. 32 min., and 4 deg. 5 min. longitude West of the Observatory at Greenwich.

The *Western portion* beyond the Quantock hills has a decidedly mountainous character. The face of the country becomes completely changed, and assumes a different aspect. Here lofty mountains and deep valleys succeed each other along the southern shore of the Bristol Channel, and extend inland twenty miles, comprising several ranges of mountains and the forest of Exmoor. The Quantock range takes a direction from South-east to North-west, a distance of about sixteen miles, and presents some prominent points, as Cothelstone Lodge, near Bishop's Lydeard; Wilneok, above Bagborough; and Dousborough, near Stowey. There are several lateral

branches which shoot out from the central ridge, forming deep and small valleys (or *combs* as they are called), which, being in general clothed with wood, are of a very picturesque character, and present some of the most striking features of the beautiful scenery for which these hills are celebrated.

The giant Dunkerry is a lofty mountain rising above the surrounding hills. On its summit are traces of three several buildings, supposed to have been fire-hearths for the beacons, which were heretofore kept in readiness on this elevated spot, which was also the watch-tower of the surrounding district.

The panorama, viewed under a clear atmosphere, comprises a circumference of little less than five hundred miles. On the South are seen Winsford Hill, near Dulverton; Haddon Hill, near King's Brompton; Black Down, and the distant hills in Devonshire; with Exmoor immediately on the South-west. This mountainous tract of country was, formerly, almost inaccessible, except on horseback. A new turnpike road made from Dunster to Dulverton, passing near Cutcombe, and down the beautiful vale of the Exe, has opened an easy communication from the town of Dunster across this hilly district; and the improvements made in the parish roads have effected a change most beneficial to the inhabitants and the public.

The whole of this romantic country presents an undulating outline of hills, without rugged or broken points. In the months of July and August the appearance of this part of the county is highly picturesque. The varied colours which present themselves to the eye of the traveller are peculiarly striking. The redness of the natural soil in the fallows, the vivid green of the turnip fields, and the yellow

hue of the ripe corn, extending along the sides, and frequently over the summits of the lesser elevations, form, in Autumn, a landscape of an interesting character. The broad expanse of the ocean, when tinged with the golden rays of the declining sun seen in the distance, with numerous vessels, whose snow-white sails are spread to catch the passing breeze, all combine to heighten the effect of the picture, and render the power of language inadequate to do justice to the magnificent scene.

The following is a list of the Poor Law Unions in this locality, with the number of parishes attached to each :—Bridgwater, 40; Chard, 33; Dulverton, 12; Langport, 30; Taunton, 38; Wellington, 24; Williton, 40.

The railways that intersect the county are, the Great Western on the North-east; the Bristol and Exeter (and its branches), from East to West; and the London and South-western, which traverses the Southern portion of the county.

The Western division of the county contains the following Hundreds :—Abdick and Bulstone, Andersfield, Cannington, Carhampton, Crewkerne, Houndsborough, Berwick and Coker, Huntspill and Puriton, Kingsbury East, Kingsbury West, Martock, Milverton, North Curry, North Petherton, Pitney, Somerton, South Petherton, Stone, Taunton and Taunton Deane, Tintinhull, Whitley, Williton, and Freemanors. The second, those of Axbridge, Curry, Frome, Ilchester, Marston and Pawlett; and the jurisdiction of Glastonbury and Wells, and the archdeaonries of Bridgwater, Crewkerne, Dunster, and Taunton. The chief productions of the county are coal, lead, and ironstone, manganese, calamine stone, freestone, and all kinds of building-stone, Fuller's earth, marl, ochre and slate, the latter near Wiveliscombe. Near the Brendon Hills a species of common plumbago has been found. There are three coroners—one in the Northern district, place of election Axbridge; the South-eastern district, No. 2, place of election Castle Cary; district No. 3, called the Western, place of election Taunton.

The polling-places of the Western division are Bridgwater, Chard, Dulverton, Dunster, Ilchester, Ilminster, Langport, Taunton, Williton, Wiveliscombe.

The County Lunatic Asylum for paupers was established in 1848. These extensive and substantial buildings are pleasantly situated in a most healthy locality, about a mile and a half from Wells, on the Bath and Frome roads, and stand upon 70 acres of land, with 12 additional acres under cultivation. At the present time (1868) there are upwards of 500 patients, and above 40 attendants and servants, and the premises are being considerably en-

larged. A Turkish bath and many other conveniences and improvements have likewise been added; the management is vested in the hands of a committee of visiting magistrates. Robert Boyd, Esq., M.D., resident physician; C. W. C. Madden-Medlycott, Esq., M.D., assistant physician; Mr. Benjamin Thomas Duke, clerk to the visitors, and clerk to the asylum; Mr. John Bristow, storekeeper and musical director; Rev. Edwin Godson, chaplain.

The assizes are held at Taunton, Spring and Winter; Wells, Summer. The quarter sessions are held—in Spring, at Wells; Midsummer, at Taunton; Michaelmas, at Wells; and Epiphany at Taunton.

The Somerset County Gaol is situated at Taunton, opposite the Shire Hall, with which there is an underground communication, so that prisoners can be removed to the courts for trial without exposure or fear of escape. The building, which covers an area of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres, is of stone, the governor's house and offices fronting the street being of brick, and has accommodation for 220 prisoners in separate cells, hospital with beds for 35, and beds for about 25 debtors. The corridors for criminal prisoners and the hospital and wards for debtors are each separate buildings. William Oakley, Esq., governor; Rev. Frederick Howse, chaplain; Henry Liddon, Esq., surgeon.

The House of Correction at Shepton Mallet is for felons, misdemeanants and debtors for the whole Eastern half of the county (except that part of Bath within the borough walls), as also of Bristol (with the exception of what is included in the county of Gloucester). It is a large and compact building, capable of containing about 300 prisoners. The system of separate confinement and industrial occupation is carried out (as at Pentonville prison). There is a treadmill. A chapel was erected in 1849; the seats are arranged in an amphitheatrical form, and are also on the Pentonville system; the pulpit is unusually lofty; it abuts on a gallery at the East end of the chapel, facing the seats, and is about 17 feet above the floor of the chapel; a harmonium has also been added; the cells and chapel are heated by hot-water pipes. William Carter, governor; Walter Henry Salome, deputy-governor; Miss Maria Dix, matron; W. C. Walker, surgeon; Rev. Edward Hyde F. Cosens, M.A., Chaplain.

County Constabulary Depôt, Benedict-street, Glastonbury; Valentine Gould, Esq., chief constable of the Somerset county constabulary; 16 superintendents, 24 sergeants 28 acting-sergeants, and 245 constables; William George Bloxham, Esq., deputy chief constable and superintendent of the Glastonbury division; John Bisgood, superintendent and chief clerk; John Ridout, sergeant-major and drill.

sergeant. The superintendents of the county force are also inspectors of weights and measures for their respective districts.

The West Somerset Hospital is at Taunton, and is supported by voluntary subscriptions.

The Museum of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society is also at Taunton.

Great numbers of sheep, of different kinds, are fed on the hills and downs, and the Mendip breed is noted for the fineness of the wool.

Abundance of fowl, in great variety, are raised in the vicinity, and many geese are bred in the marshy districts.

Cider is made in most parts of the county; but the best is produced in the vale of Taunton Deane, where it is made in the highest perfection. The proprietors of orchards in this delightful vale are supposed to possess an art peculiar to themselves of conducting the fermentation, by which a rich and delicious flavour is preserved.

Salmon and herring fishing is carried on to a considerable extent at Porlock, Minehead, and Watchet. Tumbling flounders, land-dabs, hakes, pipers, soles, plaice, skate, conger-eels, shrimps, prawns, crabs and mussels, are caught and sent to various parts.

The castles of its early lords were at Dunster, Enmore, Henton, Ilchester, Nunney, Stoke Courcy, Taunton, Castle Cary, and Somerton. There were formerly Abbeys at Athelney, Cleeve, Glastonbury, Keynsham, and Muchelney; Priories at Barlinch, Burgh, Bruton, Buckland, Cannington, Dunster, Henton, Montacute, Stoke Courcy, Taunton, Witham, and Worlepring.

Somersetshire is in the province of Canterbury, and in the diocese of Bath and Wells. The diocese is sometimes called "Somerset."

The county has a namesake at the Cape of Good Hope, in Africa, whose chief town is also of the same name.

Its situation between the Bristol and English Channels renders the air exceedingly mild and temperate. The myrtle, China rose, magnolia, fuchsia, and several other tender exotics, thrive well in the open air, and attain in sheltered situations many feet in height.

Vineyards also flourished in this county, at Bath, Glastonbury, Meare, Danborough, Axbridge, North Curry, and in many other places, and we find them recorded in the returns of the possessions of the Abbeys of Glastonbury, Bath, and other monastic establishments at their dissolution.

The cheese made in this county is esteemed remarkably fine, and in distant parts is produced as one of the dainties of the table. The sheep are generally of the smaller kind; the Mendip mutton is well known for its peculiar sweetness.

The most remarkable birds are the heath-hen, wild duck, curlew, rail, gull, and wheatear.

In Exmoor and other lower parts of the county are numbers of red deer.

On the hills and wastes we find the dwarf juniper, the cranberry, and the whortleberry. The last by the natives is called "hurts," and produces a pleasant fruit, growing singly like gooseberries, on little plants from a foot to eighteen inches in height; the leaves are ovated, and of a pale green, growing alternately on the branches. On the rocks upon the coast are great quantities of laver, lichen marinus, or sea-bread. In the moors, once deluged by the sea, grows the gale, or candleberry myrtle.





## The Hills of West Somerset.

The mountain pines are sighing,  
On Willett's lonely height;  
The landscape round is lying,  
All bathed in golden light.

Before us Quantock rises,  
Still queen of all around,  
Each wondering eye surprises  
With her enchanted ground.

Behind us Brendon swelling,  
Her widening fields displays;  
Beneath, her knolls are telling  
Of Spring's returning days.

Far off, fair Lydeard sleepeth  
Her verdant meads among;  
And sweet Coombe Florey peepeth  
Forth from her groves of song.

There's Cothelstone and Hartrow,  
And many a lordly seat;  
Gay Crowcombe and old Bagbro'  
Shine smiling at their feet.

Yonder the silver ocean  
Fringes the cliff-bound strand,  
With scarce a wave in motion  
'Twixt this and Cambria's land.

O God of beauteous nature,  
Thy glorious works we praise;  
From creature to Creator,  
Our raptured thoughts we raise.

STEPHENSON.

THE hills of West Somerset present to the visitor a striking feature in the beautiful landscape; and as they contain many numerous ores, minerals, stones, and other valuable articles, they are important to the residents. To the geologist, the naturalist, the tourist, and the sportsman, they are, of course, great favourites. We propose in the following pages to give our readers some description of the health-giving and beautiful hills of this neighbourhood. First in order we would mention the Quantocks—a fine range nearly twenty miles long, extending from West Monkton towards the North coast, near Williton and Watchet; next the Brendon, around Wiveliscombe and towards Exmoor; then the Blackdown, from Whiteball to

Pitminster; and, lastly, the lias range of Stoke, Staple, &c.

The following are some of the principal points in this district, and their heights above the level of the sea:—

	<i>Feet.</i>
Dunkery Beacon, south of Porlock .....	1,668
Wilsneck, near Bagborough .....	1,270
Brendon Hill, south of Watchet .....	1,210
Dousborough, near Stowey .....	1,022
Cothelstone Lodge, near Bishop's Lydeard..	1,060
Grabhurst, near Dunster .....	906
North Hill, near Minehead.....	824

One of the vales at the foot of these hills is known as the "Sunless Valley," from its peculiar position. It is shaded from the sun by the lofty hills adjoining.







### The Brendon Hills

are at present the only ones from which ores are extracted in this neighbourhood. The working of these hills for minerals is very ancient. There appears no doubt that the Romans were engaged in this business during their occupation of this country, as the remains of their mining implements have been found in that neighbourhood. These curiosities may be seen at the Somersetshire Archaeological Society's Museum at Taunton. Roman coins have also been found under the refuse of the mines of Brendon.

This range attains a height of 1,210 feet above the sea, and has lately acquired importance by the discovery in it of a valuable vein of carbonate of iron, a mineral employed in the manufacture of steel, and hitherto obtained chiefly from Silesia. The lode is now worked by the Ebbw Vale Company, who have constructed a railway to Watchet, to enable them to ship to Wales.

### The Blackdown Hills.

This noble range of hills form the Southern and Western boundaries of the Vale of Taunton Deane, and divide Somerset from Devonshire. Their formation is entirely different from those which have already been mentioned. They are mostly of the "green sand" formation, and are noted for the large quantity of water they contain. It seems almost a paradox to find the tops of many of these hills quite boggy, caused from the large number of springs they contain. Many of the streams that water the Vale of Taunton Deane come from this source. The Taunton Water Company derive their soft bright liquid from these hills. On the Devonshire side it would appear that the water supply is still greater, for within about seven miles of Taunton are the spring-heads of three of the rivers which water that beautiful county, namely, the Culme, the Otter, and the Yarty, all near the "Holmen Clavel Inn," on the Blagdon Hill, South-west of Taunton. On these hills are found large quantities of flint, most useful to roadmakers; also, beautiful sand and gravel, of great service to builders and gardeners. Nor must we forget the numerous *Barrows* that are spread about. Some of them are of considerable extent; but further particulars will be found on these matters under the chapter "Earthworks." Green sand fossils of great rarity have been found on the Blackdown hills. The Romans had an encampment on these heights. A bronze figure was lately found there. The barrows already referred to, and the various encampments and fossils of the Blackdowns, well deserve further investigation. The Wellington Monument stands on the borders of Somerset and Devonshire.

### The Lias Hills South of Taunton.

The hills about Stoke, Thurlbear, Staple, and West Hatch may probably be considered as portions of the Blackdowns; but as they are of a somewhat detached and of altogether a different formation, we have classified them separately. These hills are most useful to the inhabitants of this neighbourhood, from the large supplies of lime, building and paving-stone they yield.

Lias is the name of a peculiar formation consisting of thick, argillaceous deposits, which constitute the base on which the oolitic series repose. The word *lias* is of English origin, and is said to be derived from a provincial pronunciation of the word *layers*. The upper portion of these deposits, including about two-thirds of their total depth, consists of beds of a deep-blue marl, containing only a few irregular limestone beds. In the lower portion the limestone beds increase in frequency, and assume the peculiar aspect which characterizes the *lias*, presenting a series of thin, stony beds, separated by narrow, argillaceous partings; so that the quarries of this rock at a distance assume a striped and riband-like appearance. These limestone beds, when purest, contain ninety per cent. of carbonate of lime; the residue consisting, apparently, of alumine, iron, and silex. In places where these beds are less pure, alumine of course abounds. The blue *lias*, which contains much iron, affords a strong lime, distinguished by its property of setting under water. The white *lias* takes a polish, and may be used for the purposes of lithography. The *lias* clay often occurs in the form of soft slate or shale, which divides into very thin *laminae*, and is frequently much impregnated with bitumen and iron pyrites; in consequence of which, when laid in heaps with fagots, and once ignited, it will continue to burn slowly until the iron pyrites are wholly decomposed. *Lias* clay is impregnated with a large dose of common salt, and sulphate of magnesia and soda; in consequence of which springs of water rising through it contain these salts in solution. The *lias* is remarkable for the number and variety of its organic remains, among which are numerous chambered univalves, bivalves, certain species of fish and vertebral animals allied to the order of lizards, some of which are of enormous size. The *ichthyosaurus*, one of these, has the orbit of its eye ten inches long and seven broad; and the *plesiosaurus*, of which five species have been found, measures twenty feet in length. This rock also embraces, in some instances, bones of the turtle, fossil wood, and jet. The most valuable mineral substances obtained from it are water-setting lime and alum shale.

The Rev. W. A. Jones succeeded in discovering on the hills behind Stoke St. Mary fossil remains of a very large ichthyosaurus, which were collected and deposited in the Museum of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society.

(Further particulars will be found in the account of Stoke parish.) The waters from these hills have the power of petrifying stones or wood over which they flow.

### The Quantock Hills, &c.

To see sweet scenes romantic,  
Need we no pilgrimage;  
The views from old grey Quantock  
Grace the historic page.  
And westward still, the picturesque  
Inspires the minstrel's strains;  
For there primeval Nature,  
In lovely splendour reigns;  
For Nature there magnificent,  
In lovely splendour reigns.

How beautiful the prospect!  
These old baronial lands  
Sleep in the sunlit radiance.  
War-cry of feudal bands,  
Ere from those ancient battlements  
Resounding to the shore,  
Was heard by ancient chieftains  
And warrior knights of yore;  
Brave were those noble chieftains—  
The warrior knights of yore.

And there the princely chieftains  
By battle's proud array,  
And by paternal kindness  
Long held distinguished sway.  
There, too, the pilgrims holy  
Aye found a welcome meet,  
And saints put off their sandals  
To rest their weary feet;  
There saints put off their sandals  
To rest their weary feet.

Far as the eye enchanted  
Surveys, the aureate sheen  
Now lightens every dwelling  
In peacefulness serene.  
Oh! choose the gifts of Nature  
That so divinely drest  
This fair expanse of beauty—  
The glory of the West!  
This fair expanse of beauty—  
The glory of the West!

The Quantock Hills are a heathery range extending from the North of Taunton, towards the sea, at an elevation of from 1,000 to 1,100 feet, rising to 1,270 feet in Will's Neck, the highest point. They are steep on the Western side, but on the Eastern the declivities are more gradual, descending into winding, romantic valleys, such as those of the Seven Wells and the Hunters' Combe, favourite scenes of Wordsworth and Coleridge when they resided in their younger days at Stowey and Alfoxton.

The chain is mainly composed of the Devonian or grauwacke slate, which is islanded, as it were, in the new red sandstone forming the vales which surround it.

*Quantock*, the etymology of which range of hills, commanding such an extent of prospect both by sea and land, some wit of the past century endeavoured to deduce from *Quantum ab hoc*. The word Quantock, however, is more properly supposed to be derived from the Celtic *Gwantog*—that is, abounding in openings. This range of hills is about fifteen miles in length by four in breadth, extending from North Petherton and West Monkton on the East, to East Quantoxhead and St. Audries on the West. Its highest summits are Cothelstone Will's Neck, and Danesborough. From Will's Neck particularly the prospect is exceedingly rich and extensive. On the South stretches the vale of Taunton Deane, carpeted with the most luxuriant foliage of elm, beech, and oak, studded with villages and fair churches, and bounded by the blue line of Blagdon, or Blackdown, on which the Wellington Column stands

boldly prominent. Towards the East there are a number of inferior summits, amongst which the triple knolls of Montacute, wrapped in their vests of evergreen, are very conspicuous. Northward, there is the indented coast of Wales, separated by the intervening Channel, with its two rocky islets of the Flat and Steep Holmes, and the whole Mendip range, in the undulations of which may be glimpsed, at intervals, the line of Wraxall Down stretching behind till it terminates in the misty point of Portishead. Turning to the West, a sea of miniature mountains meets the climber's gaze—Willett, Brendon, Treborough, and Nettlecombe, with old Dunkery in the background, tossing up its heathy head, a very mountain-monarch, to the height of nearly 2,000 feet above the waters of Porlock Bay, of which he stands the guardian, and who, with his Exmoor brethren, terminates the landscape, all beyond being dim cloud and misty vapour. But the glory of Quantock is, after all, its almost countless combs—towards the East more luxuriant and richly wooded—towards the West wilder and more majestic in their character, with "heath and fern all waving wide," and "cold greystones" darting up at intervals amidst the tufted grass. In climbing Bicknoller gorge, carpeted with mountain fern, some 800 feet high, till the purple heather brightens into a blushing border higher up, a very slight stretch of imagination would fix you in "Rob Roy's country" or the wilder Highlands.

Frequently among the Quantocks, indeed all over the

county, we meet with a genuine British word—"cwm," a valley. At the foot or opening of one of the combes on the Quantocks we find a striking British name in Tre-combe, which is composed of "Tre-is-cwm"—"the dwelling beneath, or at the foot of the vale;" and the hill at the head of another cwm is called Buncombe Hill, which is no other than the British Ben-cwm, the vale head.

The great number, comparatively, of deep dells, almost amounting to ravines, which open among the Quantocks towards the Bristol Channel, and thus "divide" the range of hills, would probably give rise to their ancient name.

The county of Somerset to the Welsh population of the Principality, even now, is known by no other name than Gwlad-yr-hav. But in Welsh this word *hav* (which in Havren is, doubtless, identical with *av*, the root of Avon, a river) likewise means summer; and Gwlad-yr-hav therefore admits of being translated either the "land on the shores of the Havren," or "the summer land."

The early Saxons, who named the county, would seem to have chosen the more obvious, but less correct translation, and hence the county bears the name of Somerset.

A very prominent feature as are the Quantock Hills in our county, the stranger on a nearer acquaintance will not be disappointed, for few districts offer greater attractions to the lovers of Nature, whether as regards varied scenery, or the magnificent prospects from their summits. Seen from a distance, they present, with the exception of the height we have mentioned, a gently undulating outline, and from the South-eastern extremity are divided into distant ridges, spread out in the form of a fan, having one extremity at North Petherton, and the other at West Monkton, with a gradual slope to the alluvial lands below. On the Eastern side lateral branches spread out from the main range, thus forming the beautiful valleys called combes; on the Western side the descent is much more rapid.

Payne says that the Quantocks are true Devonian rocks, and that the unmeaning and most unsatisfactory word, "Grauwacke," should be given up as applying to them.

The native of these parts, or the tourist who has a soul for the beautiful and grand, may well exclaim with a local poet, especially when returning from a long journey, or a long visit—

"Oh Somerset! thy hills and plains,  
Dear as the life-blood of my veins,  
Linked with the shades of days gone by,  
The very apple of my eye."

A few years ago the Somersetshire Archaeological Society visited the Cothelstone Hills, when the Rev. F. Warre, one

of the learned secretaries and a near resident, gave an interesting account of the view to be seen from that lofty and beautiful hill. We have made a few extracts from the reverend gentleman's description:—

Cothelstone is of great extent, of varied character, and extreme beauty. It is bounded on the East by the long ridge of Mendip, on the West by the heights of Brendon, on the South by Blagdon, and on the North by the Severn Sea, beyond which appears the coast of Wales; while to the South-west, at times, may be seen Haldon, and even the peaks or tors on Dartmouth. It embraces a variety of extent hardly to be equalled in the South or West of England; but its beauty is not its only charm. Its boundaries include many spots of historical interest, which it will be our endeavour on the present occasion to point out.

Several of the mountain strongholds of these early nations in sight—Worle Hill, Hamdon, Neroche, Elworthy and Danesborough—are all crowned with military works of early extinct nations, all of whom were soon to fall under the irresistible power of the Roman armies.

"During 400 years of Roman occupation, no doubt the inhabitants of the district before us partook of that civilization, and admixture of Roman blood, which converted the Barbarian Celt into the polished Romanized Briton. The British foss-way leading from Bath to Seaton was adopted by the Romans, and became one of their great highways. Cadbury, Ham Hill and Neroche were occupied by their troops. The mines of Mendip and Brendon were extensively worked, and even on Blackdown there have been found traces of mining operations. Villas have been discovered at Pitney, Coker, Combe St. Nicholas, and, without doubt, existed in many other places. Roman coins have been found from time to time, particularly at Conquest, immediately below us, and at Holway, a little beyond Taunton, at both which places large deposits of money have been discovered—those at Conquest in such numbers, and in such a perfect state of preservation, as to render it probable that a mint existed there; in confirmation of which, some years ago several large balls or lumps of metal resembling lead, probably the debased silver so often used in the Roman coinage, are said to have been found there, though I have not as yet succeeded in tracing any of them."

The Quantock Hills are full of interest. A Roman camp was discovered on them a few years ago. This great people also worked mines on these hills. Some of their mining implements were discovered here a short time since, and were deposited in the Museum of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society at Taunton. Cave knives have also been found in hut circles in the same neighbourhood.

These are not all the curiosities that have been discovered on these beautiful heights. The teeth of the mammoth elephant have been gathered here, where they must have lain ever since the time when this country was occupied by these giant animals, as described in our account of the geology of West Somerset in the earlier portion of this work. These teeth may be seen at the Museum above referred to.

The Quantocks are favourites with the geologist, as we shall find hereafter. Beautiful specimens of igneous rocks, that take a fine polish, have been found in these hills. Examples of some of the "Quantock marbles" are in the possession of Lord Taunton; and these beautiful stones are now being used for the ornamental work of pulpits, fonts, pillars, &c., &c.

On these extensive and romantic hills are occasionally seen eagles that have flown across the channel from Wales.

### Red Deer.

One of the glories and celebrities of the Quantocks is the Wild Red Deer, now almost become extinct in England, except on these hills, and at Exmoor and its neighbourhood.

According to Mr. Kingsley, red deer were to be found near Bagshot less than 50 years ago, and within the last hundred years they existed in the New Forest and upon Dartmoor, as well as on the extensive open country and thick surrounding woods forming the Royal Forest of Exmoor. From want of preserving, they have become extinct in the first-named places, while upon Exmoor, from the enclosure of the surrounding lands, their haunts have been narrowed to a small space. Mr. Scrope, a keen observer, has asserted that the red deer is not a hardy animal; and as it crops close, like a sheep, it requires an extensive range of pasture. It may be therefore feared that the comparatively narrow limits to which these animals are now confined may still further reduce their numbers in the West country.

As an account of a stag-hunt may prove of interest to some of our readers, who possibly have not had an opportunity of witnessing this exciting sport, we annex a graphic account by an old sportsman.

### Stag-Hunting in Somerset.

The Wild Red Deer are in a flutter, the Stag Hounds being on their trail. The first meet took place at Cloutsham, and a glorious scene it was, the attendance

being brilliant. Those who have never enjoyed the sport of hunting the wild red deer in their native haunts have missed one of the most exhilarating and healthful pleasures of out-door life; and we advise them, if they want a real, good, enjoyable holiday, to order the 'pig skin' and 'curb' to be put on a 'thorough good hack,' and then to have a ride or two with these hounds. About 500 persons assembled on the moor from all parts of the kingdom, many being from Town direct. Of these about 200 were well mounted and ready for the hunt, including about a dozen ladies who graced the field with their presence, whilst there were many others present in carriages. M. F. Bissett, Esq., the master of the hounds, was there on his well-known horse 'Sunbeam;' and old Jack Babbage, the huntsman, staunch and trusty, was at his post, in spite of his three score years and ten, to enliven hounds and men alike with his clear, shrill voice and horn, mounted on his old favourite 'Modesty.' Old 'Jim the Harbourn' was at hand with the welcome information that he had four beautiful stags well harboured in. The tufters were thrown in the cover about 11 o'clock, and quickly Jack's 'Tally-ho,' and the first note of the hounds proclaimed the fact that a stag was roused, and soon a splendid fellow broke in sight near Parsonage Wood. The pack were laid on about half-past 12, giving the deer some twenty minutes' grace. Away to Cloutsham, thence to Cutcombe Park, where he ran into cover, disturbing a fellow stag reposing there. This, unfortunately, divided the pack: the greater part of both hounds and hunters took back after the fresh stag, over 'Old Dunkerry' to Horner Wood, while about five couples of hounds kept on the first scent. Away they went after it to Timberscombe, thence to Slowly Wood, near Dunster; and then the stag made away to Hole Water, near Nettlecombe; when, seeing it was useless to continue the chase, the noble stag was left to run again 'upon some future day,' when we can truly say, 'May we be there to see!'

### The Volcanic Rocks of the Quantocks, &c.

We mentioned that the Quantocks were full of interest to the geologist. A few years ago they were surveyed by Mr. J. D. Pring, who published sections and a geological map of this neighbourhood. Since that time the Rev. W. A. Jones has given considerable attention to this subject, and has, in conjunction with Sir Roderick Murchison (one of the greatest authorities on these subjects of



the day), examined their formation and character. The rev. gentleman gave a most interesting account of their researches to the members of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society a few years since.

Believing that some of these particulars cannot fail to prove of considerable interest to our readers, we have selected several extracts. On the Quantock Hills there are yet but three spots where rocks of volcanic origin have been found.

### The Extinct Volcanoes of the Quantock Hills, &c.

The syenite of Hestercombe, closely resembling that of which the Malvern Hills are mainly composed, was discovered by Mr. Horner many years ago as a rock of igneous origin. The quarry has long been disused, and is now overgrown with brushwood, &c.; but there is evidence of its having been worked as early at least as Henry VII.'s reign. When the old tower of St. Mary's was taken down a very large quantity of syenite was found worked up in the masonry. The greater part has been used for the new tower; but fragments may still be seen among the waste material in Park-street. The same stone was also used in building the present mansion at Hestercombe. The present state of the quarry makes it all but impossible to determine the circumstances under which the syenite in a molten state forced itself up through the beds of Devonian in this locality, and it has usually been regarded as an example of what geologists term a dike. The special interest associated with this syenite of Hestercombe arises from its isolation, and the occurrence of only two or three small patches of the same rock between this place and the Malvern Hills.

Leaving the syenite for the present, we turn our attention to the more recently-discovered rock of igneous origin near Quantock Lodge, and by the help of one of the greatest of living geologists of the age endeavour to picture to ourselves some of the physical powers and influences which accompanied its formation. So remote was the event, that arithmetical notation fails to represent, and the human mind is utterly incapable of realising, the lapse and the extent of time involved. Yet far distant in time though the outbreak occurred, the event stands clearly recorded in the great stone-book of Nature, on whose pages there are no false readings, and no errors but such as are imported by the false views of the imperfect interpreter.

In stating some of the leading results of that examination of the Quantock Hills to which we have alluded,

we feel we must confine ourselves to that which is strictly within the limits of a scientific paper. At the same time, we shall endeavour to divest the subject of all that is purely technical, and to make it intelligible, and we hope interesting, to those who are not deeply versed in geology. We shall also take leave to assure the student of natural history, whatever department he may choose, that in the midst of the woody combes, and on the breezy heights of Quantock, he would find a wide and ample field. Be he botanist or entomologist—be his favourite pursuit that of geology or archaeology—he would not want for objects of interest to engage his thoughts and enlarge his knowledge. In addition to this, we would venture to say that there are few spots in this our island home which, within so small a compass, embrace the same extent and variety of scenery, and bring so close together all the elements of grandeur and loveliness. Well might the muses of Coleridge, and Southey, and Wordsworth, have been inspired in the midst of these hills; for no poet's dream ever pictured more lovely scenes than those which present themselves in Seven-Wells Combe, where the streamlets, forever babbling sweet music as they go, now linger beneath the shade of tall birch and spreading oak, reflecting the graceful images of drooping ferns, and anon sparkling in the sunshine, murmur joyously over pebble beds amidst wild flowers of every form and hue.

We have referred to this mainly to show that the pursuit of scientific knowledge is not dull work. Truly there is poetry in its highest form in science; but the study must not be confined to mere book-lore. It is active and energetic field-work that brings the student face to face with Nature. It is thus that her deepest secrets become revealed. Our souls and our mental faculties are attuned to the harmonies of creation. The heart is touched with the beautiful, while the mind is awakened to the true, and the thoughtful man—

"Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

We shall now briefly explain how the occurrence of this igneous origin in the Quantocks was discovered. When Lord Taunton was about to build his mansion, search was naturally made on the estate for a suitable building-stone. In a quarry close by was found this hard greyish green rock, capable of being worked by the chisel. Since then Mr. Davis, builder, of Taunton, has discovered that it will take a high polish. Pillars from this stone have been introduced into the new church at Buckland St. Mary. From the specimens there exhibited its capabilities would be readily admitted. The rock possesses such a marked character as compared with the more common forms occur-

ring in the Devonian formation that a practised eye can find no difficulty in distinguishing it. Before its precise nature was known, some of the stone was forwarded to the Government Museum of Practical Geology, and on being examined by Sir Roderick Murchison it was pronounced by him to be a volcanic ash.

Some months after, that distinguished geologist stood in front of the quarry, and the whole history of the nature and origin of this igneous rock was discovered. The significance of the few bold lines of cleavage which appear on the surface, together with the mineralogical character of the stone, were sufficient to one of his knowledge and experience to prove that he not only stood before a volcanic rock, but that the very axis of the cone of elevation was before his eyes.

It is necessary also to observe that in a hamper of fossils and rock specimens from Brendon, kindly forwarded to the Taunton museum by Mr. Perceval, a fragment evidently of the same formation occurred. The existence of any rocks of igneous origin in that district was not known to Mr. Perceval nor to a captain of one of the mines, of great experience. In the course of the summer we hope the precise locality of this rock on Brendon will be established. Meanwhile we will confine our attention to that on the Quantock hills.

We have already glanced at the theory generally maintained to account for what are termed intrusive rocks of igneous origin. We will now direct our attention to this case in particular. By the sudden depression, possibly, of one portion of the earth's crust, or by the setting in of some great chemical action of unusual violence, the matter held in a fluid or semi-fluid state by the internal heat of the earth is forced up through the over-lying strata. The rupture thus occasioned might have assumed the form of a continuous break extending in a line from East to West, from Over Stowey to Luxborough, on Brendon; or, which may be more probable, several isolated volcanic craters may have been formed along this line, and the materials of the igneous rocks already known may have been poured forth, not continuously, but in masses, with considerable intervals of space intervening. The rocks brought from Quantock would be the produce of one of these volcanoes.

The features which specially tend to support this view of the origin of these rocks present themselves very obviously on the face of the quarry, which gives a capital section. Lord Taunton has kindly presented to the Archaeological Society three photographs of this quarry, from which it may be seen that all the usual marks of regular stratification (as in sedimentary rocks) are wanting, and the growth or development, so to speak, of the rock

appears to rise from the intrusion of matter in a semi-fluid state from below, in the form of cones. In fact, the quarry presents us with the section of a series of cones, one within the other. The joints have a tendency to assume the form of acute angles, the apex being of course upwards.

A straight line drawn from the apex of the higher angle will pass through the apex of all the lower angles in succession. This imaginary line (to use the words of Sir Roderick himself) may be regarded as the axis of the cone of elevation. And hence it appears that the quarry itself stands directly over that great fissure in the Devonian rocks through which the volcanic matter was poured out. At a little distance from the quarry, towards the North, a slight section of the Devonian series shows the strata tilted up by the upheaval, which still further confirms the view which the striking character of the quarry leads one to adopt.

A very careful search of every exposed rock to the Westward of this point, in Seven Wells Combe and on towards Danesborough, failed to give any indications of the occurrence of the same igneous formation; but to the East, at Cockercombe does it occur, but at a distance so inconsiderable that it may well be referred to one and the same volcanic eruption.

The labourers on the estate represented that a similar stone was quarried near Goathurst, still further East. As we were naturally anxious to verify this representation, we devoted a long day to the careful examination of the district; but though we did find a green rock, it was essentially different from that greyish-green stone of igneous origin which forms the special subject of this paper. Up to the present time, then, we only know of the occurrence of this geological formation in two places—one in the quarry a little to the South-east of Quantock Lodge; the other at Cockercombe, by the roadside, to the North-west of the Roman encampment.

We come now to consider some of the circumstances which possibly may have accompanied this volcanic eruption. The question immediately suggests itself—Was it sub-marine or sub-aerial? It was probably both. That portion of the green rock which presents all the appearance of volcanic ash was undoubtedly a submarine deposit. The core of the cone of elevation was probably upheaved above the sea level at the time of the outbreak of the volcano. With the exception of Brendon and Quantock, none of the hills which now form prominent features in this district could have been in existence. The carboniferous series of Mendip were not being deposited until long ages after: the coal measure of Wales, the lias of Polden, the oolites of Hamhill, the lias of Stoke and Thurlbeer, and



the greensand of Blagdon, were in the long and distant future. The sea of the Devonian period stretched on over a great part of South Wales, extending over France, Germany and Russia. The shores of that sea nearest to the volcanic island would probably be the highlands of the silurian rocks in Cardiganshire and North Wales.

In the midst of this waste of waters we will endeavour to picture to ourselves this volcanic island, possibly alone, or forming a link in a chain of volcanoes stretching Westward. The usual accompaniments of volcanic action—the lava, the cinder, the dust, and all the thousand chemical acids, &c., scattering death and destruction around to whatever form of life the sea of that period maintained. In time the violence of the volcanic power would expend itself. A gradual depression of the bed of the sea would follow. The island which had been upheaved would gradually sink under the water level. Meanwhile all the agencies of atmospheric action, including the most powerful decomposing agents which abound in connection with eruptions of this character, in the air and in the water, would be carrying on the work of disintegration. Bit by bit the island would melt away, and along its sides on the sea depths would be deposited, mixed with earthy and chemical matter held in suspension or in solution, the strata of "volcanic ash," which seem to present themselves on both sides of the quarry.

At length the Devonian sea would resume its wonted quiet and peaceful aspect, and beds of fine sand and slime would be deposited one after the other. Coral reefs, such as produce the rich madrepora of Over Stowey and Doddington, would spring into being, and spread beneath the surface of the shallow seas the rich carpet of zoophytic life of varied form and gorgeous hue, such as may still be seen in tropical climes. Layer upon layer, bed upon bed, through countless ages—thus it grew, until even the Quantock hills themselves represent a deposit now within sight of little less than 5,000 feet! But the strata, instead of lying as they were deposited, stand almost on end, or inclining at a great angle.

There are many questions which occur to the mind in connexion with the hypothesis we have now advanced, which can be fully answered only by the testimony of rocks that lie thousands of feet below the present surface. But the crust of the earth is not so easily cut through as the skin of an orange; and when we consider that the small and almost imperceptible inequalities on the surface of the orange bear a much larger proportion to the whole bulk than do the loftiest mountains to the diameter of the earth, we are quite prepared to understand and appreciate the difficulties which often surround the geologist in his

investigations. Yet, guided by sound principles of reasoning and generalisation, the man of science is often able to see clearly with the mental eye that which is physically far removed beyond his ken, and with confidence to trace the order of events in the history of the earth which are but dimly seen through the long vista of ages amid the dawn of life.

While treating of volcanoes so near this place as the Quantock hills, it may possibly have occurred to some whether the same horrifying eruptions which now terrify those who dwell upon the slopes of Etna and Vesuvius would ever pour destruction and death over the fertile plains of Taunton Deane. What has been once may be again; and he is a bold man who will say it is impossible. At the same time, there is not the slightest apprehension of such a catastrophe; and if an estate standing over the very crater of the extinct volcanoes on Quantock should be offered, we would advise them to accept the offer without hesitation, and to occupy and enjoy it in peace. In case this good fortune should not befall them, our next advice is, to avail themselves of the first opportunity which the summer days present to explore this beautiful district, to enjoy the glorious prospects which Willsneck and Danesborough afford, and to examine for themselves some of the thousand phenomena of Nature which reveal the wonders of the past and the marvellous blessings of the present.

### Panoramic View from the Quantocks.

"Go, look through Merrie Englands:  
Of all the shires you there may see,  
Oh! the fairest is green Somerset,  
The flower of all the West Countrie."

*Old Ballad.*

On a fine day, when the atmosphere is clear, the views to be obtained from these glorious old hills are most extensive and beautiful. To thoroughly appreciate and enjoy them, the visitor must not confine his observation entirely to one point or station, but should roam from peak to peak as fancy or inclination prompts. Willsneck, near Crowcombe, is said to be the very best spot for a single view; but this place is too far West for our present purpose. We therefore propose to conduct our readers to Cothelstone and Broomfield, and then attempt to give an epitome of the lovely and extensive prospect which lies before us, detailing in order the various places of interest as they appear. We would here remark that most of the places named in the following description may be observed by those who have good sight without the aid of a glass,

provided, as before remarked, that the atmosphere is clear. Of course a powerful telescope will most materially assist in the observation.

A little to the South of the Round Tower and the clump of trees on the top of Cothelstone, is as good a spot as we know to command the prospect on the South and West, and Broomfield will give the North and East.

We may be reminded of the description of the view from these hills given by the Rev. F. Warre, as published in the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society; but the account given by that learned gentleman refers almost entirely to past and antiquarian subjects, and consequently may not interest every reader. While exploring the Quantocks, the traveller should not fail to see Holwell Cavern, in the parish of Broomfield, between that village and Enmore. It is situated in a valley, is a natural cave in the limestone rock, and contains some beautiful stalactites, and other similar objects. An interesting account has been given of it by the late celebrated Andrew Croese, the electrician. It will be found published in one of the volumes of the Somersetshire Natural History Society above referred to.

An interesting little book has lately been written by Mr. John Draper, entitled "Somerset and the Severn Sea," in which that gentleman has given some good verses on the subject before us. We extract from it the following quotations, and would recommend our readers to procure the book for themselves, promising them that it will afford them considerable information on local topics, written in an easy and pleasing style:—

We stood on Quantock—from whose lofty brow  
A glorious vale is seen on either side;  
Where Tone, to blend with Parret, glideth slow,  
While Severn sea-ward rolls his rapid tide.  
With joy, once more, we hail those waters wide,  
Where stately argosies, with pennons gay,  
Bearing the world's rich treasures, are desoried;  
While Cambria's coast gleams with the morning ray,  
And mountain-heights beyond fade into distance gray.  
Here, on these hills, our spirit doth rejoice,  
Like yon up-springing lark, all bliss, to be;  
Inwardly singing with a quiet voice,  
And musing upon all we hear and see:—  
Around us lies the world's epitome—  
Towns, cities, hamlets, villages, and spires;  
All that for which we climb, or bend the knee—  
Ambition, love, woes, wishes, and desires,  
The cradles of our sons, the ashes of our sires!  
These are the books, the acadèmes where man  
May meditate from morn till coming night;  
The story of the past with profit scan,  
And learn deep wisdom, mingled with delight:  
Here Nature's volume spread before his sight—  
Woods, streams, fair vallies, and the mighty sea;  
On Contemplation's wing he gains the height,

Where heavenly beauty may discern'd be,  
Mid amaranthine bowers of blest eternity.

Our readers will first turn and look in a Northerly direction, which they will easily find by glancing at the distant waters of the Bristol Channel until they discern the Steep and Flat Holmes islands. A good telescope may enable them to see the Government fortifications lately erected there, and the lighthouse which is there situated. Directly beyond, on the Welsh coast, may be seen the busy port of Cardiff, and the Penarth Roads, in which numberless vessels and steamers are riding at anchor. Here is also another lighthouse, so that the town of Cardiff may be found on a clear night as well as by day.

Looking below us, we may observe Spaxton, Over Stowey and Nether Stowey. Need we remind the visitor that the latter was the favourite resort of several of our greatest modern poets? It is said that Coleridge gathered the ideas of his "Ancient Mariner" from occurrences and legends collected in this neighbourhood:

There is a spot whereon the eye doth rest,  
The poet's eye, gazing entranc'd around;  
Which he, all-eloquent, with many a guest  
Of kindred spirit, rendered classic ground.  
Mark yon gray tower, that shadowy elms surround,  
There Stowey lies;—amid whose rural bowers  
The lofty bard a lowly mansion found;  
And 'neath its lime-tree's shade, mid garden flow'rs,  
He sang his "stately songs," and lived his happier hours.

Southey and Wordsworth were also occasional visitors to this beautiful village. Near the sea is the fine old tower of Stoke-Courcy, a well-known landmark to navigators of the Channel, and which belongs to the Merchant Venturers of Bristol, who have lately contributed handsomely towards the restoration of the church and tower. Stoke-Courcy was formerly a market town and place of considerable note. It possessed a fine old castle, the early seat of the De Courcy family, and returned members to Parliament. A memorable battle was fought here in A.D. 845, between the Saxons and the Danes.

By turning a little to the East, on the right, we can plainly see the mouth of the river Parret, the sands and houses of the rising town of Burnham, and the railway to Wells. The two lighthouses on the sands are also clearly visible.

'Tis pleasant, on a summer's day, to roam  
O'er Burnham's spreading shore, all wild and free,  
And feel the breezes, as they freshly come  
Bounding and breathing from the Severn sea.  
And hither town or city folk may flee,  
And view unviol'd the sun's inspiring face;  
With winds and waves hold joyous company,  
In pensive mood with Meditation pace,  
Or join young Liberty, unfettered, in the race.

Further off may be seen Brean Down, lately fortified at Government expense. Behind the Down is the large and flourishing town of Weston-super-Mare, with its beautiful terraces and churches, backed up by the celebrated old hill called Worle Camp, an ancient and exceedingly interesting fortification, which will well repay a visit.

Bright smiled the sun upon fair Weston now,  
And the glad waters danc'd around her bay,  
As from that storm-bleach'd promontory's brow  
Across its spreading sands they bent their way.  
There met the old and young, the grave and gay,  
To breathe the bland air, or embrace the tide;  
While some were basking in the genial ray,  
And some were sauntering by the water's side—  
So lightly seem'd the hours o'er Pleasure's paths to glide.

Still further on is the once celebrated Woodspring Priory. Full particulars of this noted spot may be read in the published Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological Society. Below us lies the little village of Charlinch, which obtained a passing celebrity from the doings of those strange people, "The Princeites." Between this place and the river may be seen the once well-known and far-famed Cannington, whose priory was among those seized by the unprincipled Henry VIII., and whose annals have lately been recorded by that noted antiquarian, the Rev. Thomas Hugo. A glance may also be obtained of Enmore Castle, for many years the lordly seat of the Malet family.

The visitor will, by a slight turn to the right, now see the beautiful spire of Bridgwater, the busy port and ships, and the Bristol and Exeter Railway. Bridgwater is a town of considerable antiquity, and formerly possessed a strong castle, erected in the reign of Henry II. Near the East-gate was a rich college, dedicated to St. John. There was also a priory of Grey Friars. Leland states that there was, in addition to the foregoing, a hospital for lepers. Bridgwater has suffered considerably on several occasions from civil commotion. It is now a bustling and thriving port and town, and derives its principal importance from the manufacture of clay goods and Bath bricks, which are exported to all parts of the world. The railway works of the Bristol and Exeter Company also increase its wealth and business.

Passing the eye over the flat marshes around Wedmore and Mark, the celebrated rocks known as the Cheddar Cliffs may be observed; and those interested in the geology of this part of the country should visit these extraordinary places. A good account of them may be found in "Butler's Delineations" of Parts of Somerset.

It is a wild and wondrous scene. Down rift,  
From his rude forehead to his rocky feet,  
Stands the bold mountain o'er that fearful cliff:—  
There dread Sublimity hath ta'en her seat,

Where furious Flood and fiercer Tempest meet,  
To do the biddings of their father, Time.  
Old Cheddar's deepening chine, all lone and gray,  
And "hush'd in grim repose," now full before him lay.

Taking a passing glance at the Polden Hills, behind which is the fine, ancient city of Wells, near the glorious old Mendips, we call our readers' attention to a well-known landmark, crowned with a lofty tower. We allude to Glastonbury Tor, and need we say we are now upon holy ground. For centuries Glastonbury Abbey was noted, far and wide, for its princely hospitality and kingly revenues, and is even now glorious in its very ruins. The Isle of Avalon, or the Glassy Island, will for ever be the favourite resort of the antiquarian and historian.

And on that spot, where yon lone ruins stand,  
A few disciples met, in sweet accord;  
And, with inspired heart and willing hand,  
Built up an altar to the living Lord,  
And offered prayer, and preach'd His sacred Word.  
Then came, and were baptis'd, not a few,  
Converted, they our only God ador'd;  
While, still increasing, great their numbers grew,  
'Till Truth from Heaven spread, wide o'er the land, like dew!

Then, by Hibernia's tutelary Saint  
In after-time, the first fam'd Abbey rose;  
And with it wealth, and power without restraint,  
Making the mighty friends, and awing foes.  
Though fire consum'd, and earth's internal throes  
Its proud towers tumbled even with the dust;  
Yet still again it flourish'd in repose—  
'Till Providence decreed—all-wise and just—  
Its fall beneath the grasp of tyranny and lust.

Returning homewards, the eye rests for an instant upon a plain where once England's sons met in civil warfare. Sedgemoor will not soon be forgotten in the West of England, nor the gallant and unfortunate Duke of Monmouth. Our readers have already been told in an earlier chapter that the whole of these plains were once covered by the sea, and that the titles of the villages still bear testimony to this fact.

Yet time hath been, when yon expansive plain,  
Now verdant, form'd a broad lake's oozy bed—  
Then all around confess'd monastic reign—  
Whence Glaston's princely Abbot's board was spread,  
And monks on fast-days delicately fed.  
Then to these favour'd haunts the cygnet came,  
The heron round its shore was seen to tread;  
While, art-decoy'd, the wild fowl sought the tame,—  
Where now a village bears that lone Mere's ancient name.

On the borders of the flat country may be seen the beautiful tower of the church of North Petherton, and its pretty village, once a town of far greater importance.

Turning still a little more to the right, we now look due East, where the first place that demands our attention is the romantic spot called the King's Cliffs—a cleft on the North side of the Quantocks of singular beauty. The

little towers of Thurlxton and St. Michael's Church next may attract notice; and just beyond the latter is a spot well known throughout the length and breadth of these islands, where the Great Alfred lay concealed in the little Isle of Athelney, at the confluence of the rivers Parret and Tone. This spot may easily be recognised by the remains of the old tower of the ruined church of Borough-bridge, seated on its curious and steep little hill.

Between the Parret and the Tone,  
Remote from towns, secure and lone,  
Embower'd o'er with alder-wood,  
And bordered by the spreading flood—  
At least, 'twas so in elder-day—  
Rose the green isle of Athelney.  
The deer were seen amidst the brake,  
The fish to leap upon the lake;  
Among the sedge the heron stirr'd;  
The wild duck o'er the waters whirr'd;  
And wandering bees sweet pasture found  
Upon that rich alluvial ground;—  
While one—apart from other men—  
Who dwelt upon that Island then,  
Was—happier lot might well not be—  
A neatherd, with his family;  
And food, and shelter for his head,  
King Alfred found beneath his shed;  
Repaying for his homely fare,  
By sharing in the herdsman's care.

Still further beyond are the ancient towns of Langport and Somerton, the former considered to have been well known to the Romans. It is seated on the confluence of the rivers Parret and Ivel, and is now noted for its inundations, hanging chapel, and paving-stones. The latter place was formerly the county town, and is said by some to have given the name to this shire. Among the conspicuous objects in this part of our view will be observed the monument of Burton Pynsent, on the hill overlooking the North Curry Moors.

Here, raised to friendship, still unscath'd, doth stand,  
With emblematic flame aspir'd to heaven,  
That noble monument, upon the land,  
By private wealth to public virtue given:—  
Though o'er its head the threatening storm hath driven,  
And Avarice would barter it at will;  
Long may it be by lightning's shaft unruin'd,  
And patriot conservers guard it still—  
Memorial of the men who dwelt on Pynsent's hill!

Just beyond is the pretty village of Curry Rivel, with its fine old church and tower; and still further the remains of the once-celebrated Muchelney Abbey, for ages the seat of hospitality and learning.

O beauteous scenes! remote from all the din  
And strife that stir the distant world around;  
Promoters of that peace which dwells within,—  
Once more we greet your unfrequented ground:  
Like some lone deer, that late hath ta'en a wound,  
And flies to deeper shades to find its rest;  
So mid these quiet vales my heart hath found  
Freedom from ills that noisier haunts infest;  
While friendship pours its balm to soothe the troubled breast.

From Hamden's height descending—by the side  
Of Parret's devious stream anon we stray;  
Whose gentle waters through rich meadows glide,  
Until, with Ivel's mingling on their way,  
They flow around the moors of Muchelney:  
Where still the musing wanderer may see  
That ruin'd Abbey, famous in its day,  
Which, for deep crime, if pardon there might be,  
In penitence was rais'd to God and piety.

A thousand years, save one brief century,  
Have pass'd since then—yet still the gentle air  
Plays round that ancient pile as wooingly,  
As though the storms of Time had ne'er been there:  
While loving Nature shows her tenderest care  
Towards all aged things—throwing her green  
Dark-ivied mantle o'er the lone and bare,  
And gives such beauty to each fading scene,  
As makes us scarce regret the splendour that hath been.

Just under the base of our hill may be discerned the village of Kingston, with its fine old tower; Hesteroombe, for years the seat of the Warre family; Cheddon Fitzpaine, with its ancient and unassuming tower; also that of West Monkton, considered by many one of the finest in this part of the country. Further off is Durston, near which is the site of the once far-famed Monastery of Buckland, of which not a stone now remains.

All is silent now! Silent the bell,  
That, heard from the old ivied turret high,  
Warn'd the cow'd brother from his midnight cell.  
Silent the Vesper chant,—the Litany,  
Responsive to the organ! Scattered lie  
The wrecks of the proud pile.

The beautiful towers of North Curry and Stoke St. Gregory will also be visible, surrounded by the marsh lands, with their regular rows of dwarf trees and open ditches. Turning a little more towards the South, we shall observe the beautiful hanging woods of Hatch Beauchamp; and at a considerable distance beyond we may possibly catch a glimpse of the old Roman camp of Hamden Hill.

Here, like an eagle from his eyrie, gazed  
The Roman victor o'er that ample ground;  
Whence oft, when danger press'd, the beacon blazed,  
And spread th' alarm from camp to camp around:  
And here, at eve, the trumpet's brassy sound  
Startled the traveller on his lonely way;  
As up that steep the tramping cohort wound,  
Returning from the forage or the fray—  
'Twas thus in ages past—how peaceful 'tis to-day!

We shall probably also notice the steam of the train on the Chard Railway, threading its way towards Ilminster. Carrying the eye still farther on, we may catch the site, or possibly the haze and smoke, of Crewkerne.

O'er Parret's infant stream—upon the brow  
Of Hamdon's lofty hill, at length, we stood;—  
O what a glorious prospect open'd now,  
Of cultur'd fields, rich meads, and waving wood;—  
And, far beyond, the gleam of Severn's flood;—

While, form'd to kindle up the patriot-flame,  
 Yon distant column tells of gallant Hood!  
 In death by victory crown'd—renowned name,  
 Upon the roll of those who grace their country's fame!

But if we have failed in discovering the "whereabouts" of these towns, from the obstruction of the intervening hills, we shall have no difficulty in finding the ancient and goodly town of Taunton, seated at the foot of its rich and lovely vale, with its handsome towers and spires.

On Mar'lene's tower, at length, the eye may rest,  
 A pile more beauteous we shall rarely see;  
 Pride of its place, and glory of the West,  
 Proportion'd fine, light-pinnacled, and free,  
 Graceful it stands, above all rivalry!  
 And, sooth, 'tis sweet, at eventide, to hear  
 Across the vale, in fitful melody,  
 Her pealing bells—bidding the heart good cheer,  
 Or drawing from its fount some sympathetic tear!

With a good glass we can distinguish the inhabitants in some of its broad streets, and can tell the time of day from a glance at the clock on the Market-house. We are tempted to tell a story, or rather relate an amusing occurrence, that took place here a few years ago. A gentleman was trying the powers of several telescopes, and had just fixed one whereby he could see the said clock, when a rustic approached him, and, struck with astonishment at what he saw, asked to be allowed to take a peep. He could discover the time to be just 12 o'clock, and the gentleman asked him if he should like to hear the clock strike. The aboriginal expressed his assent, when a watch—a repeater—was placed at the end of the telescope, and our country friend expressed himself in the broad Somersetshire dialect, "Zure, the ould Nick hisself must be in the 'farnal pipe; I nevvver heard sich a thing afore."

Leaving Taunton, with its colleges, villas, and other buildings, we observe behind it the pretty hills of Stoke St. Mary, Orchard Woods, and Pickering, backed up by the still higher ground of Staple Fitzpaine and Curland, the whole crowned by that well-known and celebrated spot called Castle-Neroche, once the stronghold or camp of the early inhabitants of this neighbourhood.

He who may wander o'er these hills, will stand,  
 And gaze, Neroche, from off thy lofty brow;  
 And he will look o'er all the lovely land,  
 Until his heart with admiration glow;  
 But most on that fam'd vale which lies below!  
 There are the meadows rich and orchards fair,  
 Farm-homes, round which the dark elms proudly grow,  
 Beneath whose shade the old and young repair,  
 While plenteous boards abound, and generous hearts are there.

Still beyond, but out of sight, lie the old boroughs of Chard and Lyme Regis, the latter bounded by the English Channel.

Between our point of observation and the town of

Taunton we may observe, just below us, Conquest, where a battle is supposed to have taken place. Near the old village of Norton may be seen the ancient camp, overlooking the church, while beyond is the pretty village of Staple-grove.

Turning a little more to the right, we observe the church, tower, and houses of Bishop's Lydeard, just at the foot of the hill, with rich alluvial lands between them and Heathfield, Oak, Hillfarrance, and Bishop's Hull, whose towers are clearly to be seen. Beyond are those of Trull and Angersleigh, the lofty spire of Pitminster, backed up by the noble Blackdown range which bounds the horizon.

While looking at these hills, which enclose the Vale of Taunton Deane, the eye will rest upon a very conspicuous object, namely, the Wellington Monument, erected in honour of the great hero of Waterloo, &c.

On Blackdown's brow a lofty column stands,  
 That overlooks the Tone's rich vale below;  
 Uprais'd by patriotic hearts and hands  
 To him whose prowess dealt the deadliest blow  
 To Europe's conquerer and England's foe!  
 What native breast feels not the ennobling flame  
 Of freedom in his veins more proudly glow,  
 When gazing hence upon that spot, whose name  
 Is ever blended with the mighty hero's fame!

The train on the Bristol and Exeter Railway may be seen plunging into the Whiteball tunnel. Nearer we notice the smoke of the town of Wellington, with its fine old tower; and nearer are the church and tower of West Buckland, upon a little knoll.

Among the hills to the right, but out of sight, is Milverton, with the high lands of Langford Heathfield, crowned with its church and tower; beyond which lie Kittisford, Thorn St. Margaret, and Runnington, bounded by the hills of Devonshire.

Still moving around to the right, we observe the hills surrounding the Wifeless Valley—otherwise Wiveliscombe—bounded by the Brendons. Nearer may be discerned the towers of Fitzhead and Ashpriors, the beautiful valley of flowers, and the residence of the late Sidney Smith. At Combe Florey we may notice the steam of the rushing train winding between the numerous little hills, with its load from Watchet to Taunton.

We are now among the mountains, and the prospect, though romantic and beautiful, is not so extensive, nor have we many towns, villages, or places of importance to point out.

Up steep embower'd banks ascending slow—  
 Bold wood-crown'd summits rising on each hand,  
 With the blue ocean spreading far below—  
 Soon on broad Exmoor's swelling hills we stand;

Where, like a rolling sea, afar expand  
Alternate height and hollow—while between  
Their fern-clad slopes that grace the sterile land,  
Some gentle streamlet makes each valley green;  
And sings a joyous song, to cheer the dreary scene.

O bounteous Nature! wheresoe'er we rove,  
However bare and lone the spot may be,  
Some object will be there to claim our love,  
Some foot-prints of pervading Deity:  
Wide spreads the gloomy waste without a tree,  
Yet from its turf the sweet thyme breatheth nigh;  
And the shy flock, half-wild, doth wander free—  
While on its summits you may oft descry  
The red-deer's antler'd head stand out against the sky.

The churches of Brompton Ralph and Huish Champ-flower, seated upon hills, may attract attention; but Tolland and Glatworthy will be out of sight. Among these hills rises the Tone, which wends its modest way among such furze, broom, and ferns, as the artist and lover of Nature glory in. Directly below lie the fine old church and tower of Lydeard St. Lawrence, and to the West the "Royal Forest of Exmoor," where are the sources of the rivers Exe and Barle.

Among the Nalads of the lonely moor,  
That make sweet music for the poet's ear,—  
As from their founts the rapid waters pour,—  
The young Exe danceth on with current clear:—  
Along its winding course we follow near,  
Down the wild waste, and verdant dale, until  
Winsford's gray tower and village-roofs appear,  
On each side shelter'd by a wooded hill,  
Where all, the valley through, save Isaac's stream, is still.

And there, retired, mid cottage-homes, you find  
A welcome rest, close by a brooklet's side;  
With shadowy elms before, and hills behind—  
In prettier spot one would not wish to bide  
The sultry hours that mark a Summer's tide:—  
Here doth the angler come, and slowly stray  
By the green banks, where shadowy waters glide;  
With well-dissembled fly the trout betray—  
Then 'neath the "Royal Oak" wear out the pleasant day.

Still working round towards the North, may be seen the high hills behind Minehead; and we now catch a glimpse of the blue waters of Porlock Bay, on the Bristol Channel or Severn Sea. We also get a peep of Dunster, with its fine old Castle, the residence of the Luttrells, but formerly of the De Mohuns. Looking over or between the well-known land-mark, the Cunigar Hill, crowned with its tower, we have an unlimited view of the broad Atlantic, with its sailing vessels, steamers, and numerous fishing-boats.

Then onward o'er that mountain-range we tread,  
Whence the dark heath-cock springs—until we come  
Upon the verge of sea-ward Quantoxhead;  
And hence behold the temporary home  
Of Rydal's famous bard;—who loved to roam  
These hills and woods—and oft with him who sung  
"The Ancient Mariner," until the gloom  
Of silent eve—when each responsive hung,  
With charmed ear intent, upon the other's tongue.

But they are gone—yet still their words remain,  
Like that bright golden flower which never dies;  
The true-born poet doth not live in vain,  
But leads the soul through beauty's paths, to rise  
Up to that "good supreme," the world denies:—  
Here, mid these conscious scenes, where'er we rove,  
Some kindred object to their voice replies;  
Yon babbling brook, that haunted holly-grove,  
Re-echo to the heart those lyrics that we love.

Lingering, we leave such memories with regret,  
And turn our wandering steps towards the West;  
Where long, with eager thought, our eyes were set,  
To gaze on scenes with equal beauty blest:—  
And now, behold! from this high ground they rest,  
Carhampton, on thy hills—while wood and lea,  
And tributary streams those vales invest;  
From fair St. Audries, sloping to the sea,  
To where Dunkerry stands in clouded majesty.

Bold, rising on an insulated height,  
With deep encircling woods, all verdant, crown'd,  
Thy Castle, Dunster! proudly meets our sight;  
Though loftier mountains grandly girt thee round:  
And thou hast heard, in stormier times, the sound  
Of war's hoarse trumpet, and the cannon's roar;  
Where now the timid deer treads o'er thy ground,  
And nought comes louder than the waves that pour  
When Northern winds are high, along thy level shore.

Thence over Grabhurst's verdant sides we're led,  
A beauteous valley lying on each hand;—  
Here the swift Holn sings o'er his pebbly bed,  
And there lone Minehead sits upon the land,  
Like some sad widow, looking o'er that strand  
Where erst her merchant-barques were wont to be;  
Now few, and far between, their sails expand—  
Yet still the stranger, musing by the sea,  
Doth ponder o'er that spot from lofty Greensalegh.  
Soon on its Western verge, where slopes the hill,  
We pause—and Lucombe's village lies below;  
There, in that soft seclusion, all is still,  
Save the low murmur of a brooklet's flow:—  
Then down through arch'd lanes, where hollies grow,  
That form a vista cool, obscure yet clear,  
With lighter, quicker step, we onward go,  
Until the wanderer meets with welcome cheer,  
And friendly words that fall, like music, on his ear.

That splendid old ruin, once the repository of the fine arts and hospitality, known as Cleve Abbey, is also within sight; and we may observe the passing puff of white steam from the engine on the new railway from the Brendon Hills to Watchet, bringing down the iron ore from the mines worked by the Ebbw Vale Company, to be taken across the Channel to Wales, and there smelted and made into cast and malleable iron. We may likewise catch a sight of the shipping in the little port of Watchet, backed up by the high cliffs containing alabaster and limestone, which the celebrated Smeaton selected for hydraulic cement, with which to erect the lighthouses on the Eddy-stone and other places.

We now glance at the hills around Crowcombe, Stogumber, and Bicknoller, and may probably see the towers

of some of these places. Beyond them is the straggling town of Williton, with its modest little church; also the church and tower of St. Decumans, where the legend is held that the lady of the neighbouring baron was buried alive, and the discovery made by the attempt of the sexton to despoil her ladyship of her jewels.

We next glance at East Quantoxhead, where these glorious old hills dip into the waters of the Channel. Here is St. Audries, the beautiful seat and grounds of Sir Alexander Hood, Bart., and the fine church and tower, adjoining, lately rebuilt by Sir P. P. F. P. Acland, Bart.

We have now returned to the point whence we started, and by this time the observer ought to be pretty well posted up in his local geography. We have often been surprised at the want of information that many generally well-read persons exhibit respecting their own neighbourhood. While they know, or profess to know, the details of foreign countries, many are altogether ignorant of those of their own county. Surely geography and history, like charity, should begin at home.

### The Geology of the Quantock Hills.

Probably by this time our readers will think we have already said enough about these hills; but our account could not be considered complete if we omitted to touch on their geology. In doing this we shall extract from the description given by Mr. J. H. Payne, published in the year 1854.

The watershed of the Quantocks is difficult to determine, as there is no river or stream of any size. Each little valley seems to claim for itself the right to drain its own domain. It may be considered, however, as generally tending Southwards.

It is now proposed to supply the town of Bridgwater with water collected from the Northern side.

The whole range owes its present elevation to the action of internal fire, in ages long gone by; probably before the disturbance of the Somerset coal fields, which we know was before the deposition of the lias.

In their present form, then, we may consider them as amongst our very oldest monuments of the power of the Almighty Worker, with whom a thousand years are but as one day.

In their present state of peace and quietness it is difficult to realise the fact that the Vale of Taunton Deane and the surrounding hills were disturbed by active volcanoes; yet such, doubtless, was the case. A walk to Hestercombe woods, or to Lord Taunton's estate, on the other side of

the Quantocks, will enable the visitor yet to perceive the disturbance in the soil and stone caused by these eruptions.

Commencing our survey on the North-East of Crowcombe, near Fire Beacon, we find, in a quarry, beds composed of greenish and purple tinged sandstones, much cleaved, and the dip imperfect and Southerly. It has a talcose appearance, and bears no trace of fossil remains. Clay slate lies between these beds, and which looks very much like *soapstone*, though it is not in the least *steatitic*, but contains a large proportion of silica and alumina, and a small trace of magnesia. Passing on to the Northern escarpment of Will's-neck hill, is a hard, light, greenish-looking slate, opening with purple stains, and also some red purplish sandstones. The former have a chloritic appearance, though chlorite is not found, on analysis, to be present. It is of an extremely indurated nature, and contains a large proportion of siliceous matter, the dip about 22 deg. South, and thick bedded. Along the newly-cut road from Will's-neck to Ely Green are red and grey sandstones; but from the shallowness of the cutting no perfect dip could be observed. A mile or more West of Cockercombe we find the slates laminated and assuming a rich claret colour, but, to all appearance, without the substrata of sandstone, or of any organic remains. The slates of Asholt, Lower Asholt, Buncombe Hill, and Cothelstone, occupying a cross line South-East to South-West, all appear of the same character, viz., laminated with slightly glossy separations, and of a reddish grey colour. At Asholt the dip is South-East, about 30 deg.; in the Western part this variety appears to be non-fossiliferous, but at Buncombe Hill and in the direction of Asholt fossil remains are to be found in abundance, as will presently appear.

Beyond Buncombe Hill the banks by the roadside shew the red sandstone beds, without a trace of any organic remains.

Returning to Cothelstone below the hill, or rather, on its slope in the park, we find the slate to be of the greenish blue variety, containing occasional casts of encrinites. Further East, in a quarry by the road-side, we observe a sage-colour clay slate, having a *steatitic* appearance.

In the sandstone of this quarry may be found small encrinital impressions; the dip of the strata is about 20 deg. Southerly. At Buncombe Hill, near the four cross roads, Eastward, the slate varies in colour from slight olive to purplish, and contains abundance of fossil shells, the most abundant being *atrypa*, with *orthides* and *spirifera*. A few encrinital casts also occur, and the coral

*Fenestella*. The slate here is finely laminated: dip Southerly, 30 to 35 deg.

In a lane Westward of Lydeard Cross, on the road to Broomfield, we may observe ferruginous-like and soft yellow sandstones, with an abundance of beautifully-formed discs and casts of small encrinites. In a specimen  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches by 2, there are 1,800 appearing on one side of the specimen only. The slate also of this neighbourhood contains impressions of encrinites, but fewer than in the sandstone. We pass now to the Southern part, where we have the quartzose schists or slates. At Edgborough, or Adsborough, we find a siliceous, argillaceous slate, slightly tinged with green, with large veins of quartz intersecting, at an angle of about 60 deg. South, the slates dipping about 45 deg. South. The cutting at Green Dragon Hill, near Taunton, offers an excellent view; the slate is more finely argillaceous than at Edgborough or Adsborough, and the colour more of a purple hue.

At West Monkton we find a similar rock to that at Thurlxton, but containing perhaps more gritty, hard, sandstone beds. Exposed in the road to Cheddon Fitzpaine, we observe a remarkable change to a hard siliceous slate of an olive green colour, and gradually passing at Hestercombe to the whet-stone grit, and in the public road West of Hestercombe dipping at the high angle of 70 deg. or thereabouts. Near this spot we meet with the celebrated granite, or rather syenite dyke, discovered by Mr. Horner in 1814, the slates becoming more close and hard as we gradually approach it, the effect of igneous action. Mr. Horner thus describes his most interesting discovery:—"In passing through the village just named (Cheddon) I observed in the street a small block of stone, differing in appearance from any I had found previously, and upon examination I found it to be granite—a rock I had searched for before without success; and, indeed, this is the only place where I saw an unstratified rock in the whole district, the porphyry and green stone which accompany this formation in Devonshire being wholly wanting here. On enquiry I found that this granite, called by the country people 'pottle-stone,' came from an old quarry, not far distant, in the grounds of Hestercombe, belonging to Mr. Warre. My informant brought out of his house a whetstone, which he said came from another quarry close

by the pottle-stone. It was a greenish compact stone, very like some horn stones, or some of those close-grained siliceo-argillaceous compounds, which it is very difficult to name."

Extending our examination towards Broomfield, and a little to the South, we get a laminated slate of a deep grey colour, and by the old and now abandoned Broomfield copper mine true killas may be observed. The slates at the mouth of the adit dip almost perpendicularly, with a tendency South, however. Here we may observe fine white quartz, with sulphuret of copper. Near Old Mill, by Broomfield, we get a gritty, argillaceous flagstone of a purplish hue. The beds dip about 30 deg. South, and the quarry offers an admirable section, being nearly 30 feet in height. Returning by way of Kingston, we find in the lane leading to Tarr Farm a purplish slate, occasionally verging to green in colour; and we may observe here a most remarkable example of angular contortion of the strata, the dip being upwards of 70 deg. South, and covered by horizontal beds of red, argillaceous sandstone conglomerate. In this Southern district we note a total absence of all organic remains. The whole of this series of rocks owe their origin to sedimentary deposits. Those, then, who are acquainted with the present formation of coral reefs in the Pacific ocean, will not be surprised at the limestone-beds we meet with in the Quantocks; for we may describe the whole Quantock range as the bed of an ancient ocean, and the spots of limestone as being the coral reefs of that ancient sea, and the lasting monuments of the labours of those wonderful little zoophytic creatures whose remains are plentiful in these spots, for many of these beds yield beautiful corals. We may remark that invariably we find the beds of coral limestones on the slope of the hill. *Favosites reticulata* has been met with in the reddish limestone of Adscombe, Over Stowey and Doddington; it is also found in the very dark indigo-coloured beds, as well as *acervularia goldfussi*, named by M. Milne Edwards, near the old mine at Doddington, and *alveolites suborbicularis* in the limestone beds of the same neighbourhood. The *favosites polymorpha* is a very prevailing coral at Over Stowey, Asholt and Doddington, as well as in the darker coloured beds of Blackhill and Higher Heathcombe.



## West Somerset.

### Earthworks and Early Camps.



WEST SOMERSET having been in ancient times successively occupied by various tribes and nations, most of which were in a constant state of warfare, we naturally expect to find numerous camps and other fortifications; nor shall we be disappointed.

In various spots, and especially on the hill-tops, we meet with these interesting relics of past ages. Some of the old tracks or roadways of the ancient Britons or other early inhabitants of this neighbourhood are yet in existence; and numerous barrows are known to the archaeologist. It is respecting these vestiges of a bygone period that we now propose to give a short epitome. It will, perhaps, be necessary to remind some of our readers that these relics are fast passing away from us. The plough—that useful servant of man—is an inveterate enemy to earthworks; and as year by year passes away, it more closely approaches our hill-tops and lofty spots.

On this subject the Rev. F. Warre thus writes:—"It is hardly possible that any one can pass an earthwork, disturbing the regular beauty of the velvet turf of a hill or down with its apparently shapeless masses, without wishing to know by whom, and for what purpose, it was constructed, and staying to take a closer view of it. When he observes marks of a rude engineering science—the entrance covered by flanking defences and commanding courses of platforms—he must wish to know its general plan, and he speculates upon the use of its different enclosures. When he finds hut-circles in sheltered recesses, and sepulchral burrows on open downs, and observes the difference between the domestic pottery of the one and the cinerary urns of the other—when he observes the connec-

tion and means of communication established through long lines of country by forts and beacons placed within sight of each other, and traces the roads leading from one station to another, still visible on the smooth surface of the down—it is impossible to resist the temptation to search for some clue to the habits of those whose vestiges these things are; and if he discovers in works apparently of the same period and evidently of military origin, types so completely distinct as clearly to indicate some difference either in the intention or the nation of the constructors, he will need no excuse for devoting some portion of his time to the attempt to elucidate the mystery."

According to Phelps, a British trackway may be traced from the East and continued on towards the West, over the Blackdown Hills, forming part of the boundary line between the counties of Somerset and Devon, and extending onwards by the Wellington Monument.

Another line of British trackway coming from the Bristol Channel, near Minehead, crossed the Western part of the kingdom, on which Taunton is situated, and literally passed through the post at Neroche.

Returning to "Travellers' Rest," on the Blackdown Hills, we pursue the new turnpike-road to Taunton, and near the boundary of the county, now defined by the extensive and flourishing plantations of Sir T. Trayton Fuller Drake, Bart., and enter on the extensive waste called Brown Down. The eye is immediately attracted by several barrows on the Western side of the road. Three are in a line with the road, and are called Robin Hood's Butts; but how they acquired this appellation there is no tradition in the country. They are about a quarter of a mile apart, and sixty feet in diameter, and have been

opened—one in 1818, when nothing was discovered but a heap of flints in the centre, without the appearance of an interment. Simmon's Barrow, near the Wellington Monument, is of considerable extent, and is said to have been composed wholly of stones, and to have covered more than two acres of land.

On a strong and commanding post on the Quantocks, near Stowey, is Danesborough or Dousborough, consisting of an entrenched camp, occupying the summit of the hill, and overlooking the vale below, with the bay and entrance of the river Parret. This is a strong Belgic-British fortress. The form of the entrenchment is an irregular oval, encompassing an area of level ground on the point of the hill, containing about ten acres. A deep fosse and lofty agger, formed of the materials dug from the trench, surrounds the whole, in many parts nearly 40 feet wide and 18 deep. The highest point is at the Eastern extremity, where was an entrance into the area, and is marked by an old flag-staff. There are three pits or hollows formed of stone, 15 feet in diameter and 5 feet deep, evidently sites of fire-beacons. Considerable heaps of stones on the same spot indicate buildings to have stood there. At the Western end of the inclosure is an oval barrow, which appears to have been opened. It must have been a strong position, from its situation; and the traces of a road leading from the British trackway on the South may be found. The area is covered with dwarf oak and heath, which extend over the vallum. A path-way leads to the flag-staff, where is an extensive view of the country on the North and East.

There are many other interesting relics of forts and barrows on these hills. By inspecting one of the Ordnance Maps their relative sites and names may be known. Elworthy Barrow is a large unfinished Belgic-British entrenchment, containing an area of from 15 to 20 acres. The situation chosen for this stronghold is admirable—on the highest point, facing the South, and in view of the Vale of Taunton, bounded by the ridge of Blackdown. Immediately on the South-West is another post, evidently formed by the same people, and occupying a prominent point between two lateral vales, overlooking the river Tone, which flows down a deep defile among the outlying branches of the Brendon Hill. It is two miles South-West of the post on the hill above-mentioned, and is called Castle Hill Camp. The form is an irregular oval, corresponding with the summit of the hill on which it stands, and a mile to the North-West of Clatworthy. This small entrenchment seems to have been formed to repeat signals from Castle Hill above to another British post, two miles lower down the valley, on the East side of the Tone, and also called Castle Hill, situated on a bold point above the

river, and in the parish of Bathealton. This camp is similar to those we have already described, and contains an area of about seven acres, commanding several small vales opening into the line of the Tone. All these works seem to have been made for the defence of this barrier against the tribe of ancient people inhabiting West of this boundary.

Dunkerry Beacon is the highest point of land in the county, and, with the exception of a peak in Dartmoor, called Cawsand Pike, the highest in the West of England. Its name is derived from "Dun," a hill, and "creagh," a British word for peak. On its summit are considerable remains of antiquity, which, with the magnificent view from its beacon, will amply repay the fatigue of a visit, particularly under the favourable circumstances of a fine day and a clear atmosphere. It seems to have been subsequently used as a beacon, as there are remains of several fire-hearths within its area, placed in a triangle, with one in the centre.

We have documents to show that three or sometimes four beacons were placed together in this part of the county; and upon the lighting of one or more, signals were made, which conveyed intelligence respecting the approach of an enemy on the coast. The instructions given to the keepers of the beacons in the neighbourhood are recorded in a book among the archives of Sir John Trevelyan, Bart., at Nettlecombe.

On the high ground West of the Parret exists a line of hill forts. Of these the most Northerly is the Castle Hill, at Stowey. The next is Rowborough, in the parish of Broomfield, which is connected by the beacon at Cothelstone with the earthworks at Norton Fitzwarren, commanding the valley of the Tone, and the very strong fortress on Castle Neroche. The last of the forts is on Hambdon Hill.

On the top of Blackdown Hill, above Blagdon, is a group of eight barrows.

On the hills around Taunton barrows and tumuli are frequently found on the line of road leading into the West. On the Quantock Hills are several. On Brendon Hill they stand on each side of the roadway. A barrow on the top of the hill, in the parish of Luxborough, was opened by the surveyor of the highways to obtain materials for the repair of the roads. On the removal of a portion of the earth, a large stone, of a quality different from those of the neighbourhood, was discovered, measuring five feet in length by three in breadth. This being turned aside, another stone, of whitish slate (from the neighbouring quarry at Treborough, no doubt), was found under it.

The Quantock Hills were occupied by the Cangi, who

had a very strong camp near Stowey, which commanded a secure harbour (Cumbwitch) for the shipping employed in conveying the metals from Cornwall, Devon, and Wales, and which, when smelted, were transported, with the lead of Mendip, to the Hampshire coast by a road to be traced along the ridge of Polden Hill, where it joins the road from Uphill.

### Castle-ne-Roche.

This strong Belgic-British post is situate on a bold and projecting point of Blackdown, seven miles South-East from Taunton, on the higher road to Chard. It overlooks the Vale of Taunton, and the greater part of the central district of Somersetshire on the North and East, and on the South the vales of the Yarty and Otter in Devonshire.

The approach to the Castle from the road near Curland is steep, and winds through the fosse to the East of the inclosure, on the summit of the ridge which connects it with the hill beyond. This neck of land is strongly fortified by a double agger and ditch, and is an outwork to the whole.

On these subjects the Rev. F. Warre thus writes:—

There is a chain of forts of British, or, at all events, ante-Roman origin, protecting the mining district of Somerset, and watching the Belgic frontier, so disposed that, by fires lighted on their heights, intelligence of any approaching danger could be conveyed through a very large district, as quickly as was possible before the electric telegraph annihilated both time and space.

Of this chain of forts, Castle Neroche is a very important link, communicating on one side with Hamdon Hill; on the other, with Dumpdon, and within sight of Mendip, Brean Down, Cothelstone, Dousborough, and Elworthy. At its Eastern extremity the line of Bleadon Hill suddenly changes its character, and from a tract of tame, though elevated, table-land rises abruptly into what may be called, in comparison with the general outline of the ridge, a bold and striking eminence, commanding, in every direction, a prospect equally remarkable for its great extent and varied beauty. On the North extends the rich Vale of Taunton, bounded by the heights of Quantock and the Severn Sea, the Havren of the Celtic poets, the habitation of the aboriginal tribe of the Cangi. Beyond this may be seen the hills of South Wales, the mountain home of Caractacus, and the indomitable Silures. On the West, the ridge of Brendon, the Eastern frontier of the Dumnonii, bounds the view. On the South and East extend the territories of the Morini, Durotriges, and Hedui, for centuries the battle-field of

the Belgic invaders and the original Loegrian tribes. From this point the beholder may see the earthworks of Dumpdon, Hamdon, Worle, Dousborough, and Elworthy, and immediately on the opposite side of the broad vale rises the beacon of Cothelstone, rendered more conspicuous by the modern tower which crowns its summit. So commanding a point would hardly be neglected on a frontier defended by a system of repeating forts; and accordingly we find it occupied by one of the most remarkable fortifications to be met with in the South of England.

But the earthworks are still before us, and, though mutilated and obscured by extensive plantations, are still sufficiently preserved to enable us to form a tolerable conjecture as to their original plan and design; and it will be more interesting to endeavour to show what they were, than to perplex ourselves with guesses about the boundaries and defences of tribes, the very existence of which is rather a matter of tradition than of history. Of all the so-called improvements of modern days, there is, perhaps, none more annoying to the antiquary than that, at one time so generally adopted, of planting the areas of ancient fortifications with trees.

Leaving, then, the high road from Taunton to Chard, on the right, after a walk of something more than a quarter of a mile, we arrive at the end of a rampart, consisting of a trench and high bank, on the right side of the path. This is the lowest of a series of what may almost be called fieldworks, protecting the only accessible side of the beacon, and continued quite across the sloping side of the hill, in the form of a small segment of a large circle. On turning either flank of this rampart, we find ourselves in front of another, consisting of a double trench and agger, above which again rises a second segmental rampart, similar in construction to the first, but facing more to the N.W., the interior of which is also flanked by a double trench and rampart; and, still higher up the steep ascent, two more ramparts and ditches occupy the face of the slope, from one precipitous side to the other, altogether forming a series of works amply sufficient for the protection of the beacon, the two sides of the narrow slope being too steep to require any regular entrenchments, though they were, perhaps, strengthened by platforms for slingers. We now find ourselves on the top of the beacon; and from this point, but for the plantation, we should obtain a comprehensive view of the whole entrenchment, which lies immediately below us, on the South of a deep trench, dividing the beacon itself from the rest of the hill. This trench may have been in part natural, but it has been so much increased by artificial

escarpment as to render it an efficient defence either to the beacon or to the main fortification, in case either of them was attacked by a hostile force. Round the summit of the beacon itself traces remain of a massive wall of strongly cemented masonry; but this has been pronounced by a highly competent authority to be of Roman construction, and is consequently of later date than the earthworks described. As this, however, probably replaced the stockade of wooden beams, which it is believed usually crowned the British mounds, the beacon must have always presented obstacles well nigh insurmountable to any attack not conducted with the science peculiar to the warfare of civilised nations. From this point the slopes of the hill towards the North-East, on the one side, and on the South-West on the other, are so steep as not to require any artificial defences; and these accordingly, with the exception, perhaps, of platforms for slingers, were dispensed with, except in that part of the camp which constitutes that remarkable feature of British fortification. The way which passes through the ramparts at the North-Western corner of the inner bailey is also modern; but one of the original gates, probably the main entrance to the place, may still be traced at the North-Western corner of the smaller enclosure. This is one of the most remarkable features of the place, and shall be more particularly described hereafter. From this gate the interior fortifications of the place, consisting of two very deep trenches, with aggers of corresponding magnitude, extend to a considerable distance towards the South-East, and then, turning with an easy curve towards the East, the external rampart of the two, finishes near the modern approach to the cottage, from the South-East; while the interior is continued quite up to the precipitous descent of the hill on the North-East. These ramparts enclose the cottage, with its garden and field, and constituted the great line of defence of the main body of the place. The modern road from the cottage, passing, as before mentioned, through the ramparts on the West, leads us a few yards along the very brink of the steep descent, and at a short distance from the rampart cuts through the North-Western extremity of the external defence of the place.

But perhaps the most remarkable discovery which has been made in connection with the fortress of Neroche remains to be mentioned. The name of the parish in which this curious entrenchment is situated is Staple Fitzpaine, the first part of which a local antiquary of great research derived from the Latin *Stabula*, and considered it to indicate the vicinity of a Roman cavalry station. And in confirmation of this opinion, the workmen engaged in

draining a field at about the distance of a quarter of a mile, discovered an immense heap of cinders and scoræ, such as might be expected near a very large forge, and among them a considerable number of horse-shoes, evidently of very ancient date. One of them, being shown to a groom of great experience, was pronounced by him to be a shoe of excellent construction, and to have the plate sloped away, so as to protect the sole of the foot from pressure, which is generally supposed to be an improvement of modern veterinary science. So true it is, that there is nothing new under the sun!

### Norton Camp.

The summit of the hill on the North of the parish church of Norton Fitzwarren, situated about two miles and a-half North-West of the town of Taunton, is occupied by a very curious and remarkable earthwork. A footpath from Norton church to the rectory leads us up a rather steep ascent to the South-West side of the camp or to town, which it enters by a wicket-gate, and passing on to the North-West side, leaves it by a similar gate. The rampart being broken through at both points, another path, branching off immediately with the entrenchment, leads to the North-Eastern boundary, which it passes through by a gate now used for farming purposes. Besides these doubtful gates, four others are very evident. As to those on the North, West, and South sides, there can be no doubt, the deep excavations which formed the avenues to them being still in existence, though now occupied by trees and brushwood; while that leading to the Eastern entrance, though nearly obliterated by the plough, may still be traced through the fields in the direction of Staplegrove. The Western gate appears to have had two entrances, the space between which was probably occupied by a fortification for the defence of what was evidently the principal entrance to the place. The rampart consists of a deep ditch of irregular breadth, with an external and internal vallum, and is still perfect in the greater part of its extent; though the outer vallum has been destroyed in some parts, and the whole rampart from the Western gate to the wicket leading to the rectory is nearly obliterated. The area contained within the ramparts is about 13 acres, and has so long been under cultivation that all traces of its original contents have disappeared, with the exception of hollows leading from the four gates towards the centre of the area, which is more particularly remarkable at the Eastern entrance, where it is sufficient to act as a drain for the surface water of the enclosure. Many and various have been the conjectures of neighbouring antiquaries as to the original constructors

of this curious earthwork, and the purpose for which it was erected. As usual in such cases, the general voice has given it in favour either of the Romans or the Danes. Popular tradition says that it was once the haunt of a fierce and gigantic serpent, which having been generated from the corruption of many dead bodies which lay there, spread terror and death through the neighbourhood, and some of whose ravages are said to be portrayed in the carving of the beautiful rood-screen of the parish church. The reason for supposing Norton to have been a permanent British town is this: There is still in existence a portion of an ancient trackway, probably paved in after times by the Romans, leading from the British village Byng Ny Pwl, or the village on the water, now corrupted into Bathpool, round the base of Creech Barrow Hill to the turnpike-road near the old brick-yard, from which it probably proceeded across the vale to the undoubtedly British fortification of Castle Neroche. Now, from certain indications on the ground, alight though they certainly are, it seems likely that a branch of this trackway crossed the river Tone at Obridge, or the old bridge, near the spot where the back stream from the Firepool (at that time the main stream) is crossed by a wooden foot bridge at its confluence with the present navigable river. Now, a line drawn from this spot through Plaice-street, the name of which indicates that a road existed there in the time of the Romans, would lead very nearly to the Eastern entrance of Norton camp, and probably did actually lead there. It must be remembered that neither the locks at the end of the Priory fields nor the mills at

Bathpool existed at the time of which we are speaking, and that consequently the river at Obridge must have been much less deep and more easily forded than it is in these days."

BOROUGHBRIDGE HILL, tradition says, was also a barrow, and was probably called "Barrow Bridge." We are not aware that any examination either of this or the following hill was ever made.

At STRINGSTON, or SHEARSTON, near Thurloxton, is a rising ground, enclosed around as a fort or fortification, and which has every appearance of an ancient earthwork. Collinson states that this place formerly possessed a chapel.

SUMMARY.—There are other earthworks and camps in this neighbourhood which deserve attention, besides those already mentioned. That spot so well known to Tauntonians as Creech Barrow Hill, at Bathpool, has the reputation of being an artificial erection, though great difference of opinion exists as to this idea. The hamlet was undoubtedly a British village; and it will be remembered that the ancient road runs close by. An investigation is much needed.

Thus we have attempted to furnish the reader with a short account of these interesting relics—nearly all, alas! of what is left to us of the various nations and tribes which in early times in this land were of note and renown—now all passed away—and even their monuments and camps matters of dispute among their successors. *Sic mundi gloria transit!*



## The Rivers of West Somerset.



WEST SOMERSET, having much high land, gives sources to many rivers and streams, which descend in different directions towards the sea, intersecting the several districts, and are as follow:—The Parrett, Yeo or Ivel, Tone, Ile, Cary, Exe, Barle, Yart, Otter, Culm, and Axe. Of these, the Parrett with its branches, the Brue, Tone, and Ivel, are the largest and most important.

The Parrett (the ancient Pedridan), a large tidal river, is navigable for large vessels to the Port of Bridgwater, and by its branches the Brue, the Tone, and Ivel, to Glastonbury, Taunton, Langport, and Ilchester, for barges. The influence of the tide is felt as far as Langport on the Parrett, and at Creech St. Michael on the Tone. The Parrett has its source in Dorsetshire, and enters the county near North Perrot, flowing on the East of Crewkerne, in a Northern direction, by South Petherton, Kingsbury Episcopi, and the ruins of the Abbey of Muchelney, to Langport. It then runs in a North-Western course to Boroughbridge and Bridgwater, and by a very winding channel to Cumbwich, entering the Bristol Channel at Burnham. Its course has nothing remarkable on it, the country being flat.

The Tone has its source in a bog on Brendon Hill, in the parish of Huish Champflower, and flows down a deep valley by Clatworthy, Huish Champflower (a little to the West of Wiveliscombe), Chipstable, and Stawley, to Trace bridge. Its course is in a defile at a right angle with the general range of hills to this point, where it takes a sudden turn to the North-East, in consequence of a mass of limestone rock, near Holcombe, obstructing its current, and flows down a pleasing vale in a circuitous

course, by Kittisford and Welsford, leaving Wellington half a mile on the South. Thence it passes through Nynhead grounds and runs direct to Taunton, receiving in its course many tributary streams descending from Blackdown and the high lands on each side of the Vale of Taunton Deane. At Taunton it becomes navigable for barges, and after a course through the marsh by Creech St. Michael, North Curry, and Stoke St. Gregory, it falls into the Parrett a little above Boroughbridge, near the site of the celebrated Abbey of Athelney, founded by Alfred.

The Ile is another branch of the Parrett, which takes its rise in the high lands on the East and West of Chard, flowing Northwards, and gives name to several places, as Ilminster, Ile Brewers, Ile Abbots, and Ilford, on its banks. It joins the Parrett near Thorney Bridge.

The Ivel, or Yeo, also a branch of the Parrett, is of considerable extent, rising in the high land North of Milborne Port, from two sources—one at Charlton Horsethorpe, whence it flows down a vale to Milborne Port, Goathill, and through Sherborne Park to Sherborne, where it is joined by a stream rising above Pointington at a spot called Seven Wells, on Charlton Down, and running down a small vale to Sherborne. Both streams united continue their course through a part of Dorsetshire to near Yeovil, receiving several rivulets from the Dorsetshire Hills on the South. It takes a Northern direction for some distance, and then turns to the Westward by Ilchester and Longload, through the moors, and falls into the Parrett, near Huish Episcopi. It is navigable for barges, in the Winter season, to Ilchester.

The Yeo is the next river which claims notice. This is a small stream, and has its sources in the North side of



Mendip—one at Compton Martin, where it issues immediately from the rock, and forms a pond, capable of supplying a paper-mill at its head; it then traverses the vale of Blagdon, and is joined by another copious stream, which descends from Rickford Comb, where it drives the machinery of a paper-mill also, and then flows down into the marsh district, by Wrington, Congresbury, and Kingston Seymour, into the Bristol Channel, through a tide-sluiice near Wick St. Lawrence. Another stream issues from Banwell Hill, part of the Mendip range, where it has supplied mills immediately at its source for ages; and after running through the marsh it discharges its waters into the sea near St. Thomas's head, a short distance from the site of the ancient priory at Woodspring.

Several small streams descend from the Quantock and Brendon Hills, and fall into the Bristol Channel at Donniford, Watchet, Dunster, and Porlock.

The elevated tract of Exmoor gives sources to two considerable rivers, the Exe and the Barle, which unite their streams below Dulverton.

The Exe rises at the head of a valley West of Exford, and after passing this village it takes a Southerly direction through a deep ravine by Winsford to Exebridge, where it is joined by the Barle, a mountain stream which rises near Showlesborough Castle, on Exmoor, running by Simonds bath and Cow Castle to Withypool; thence, following a deep wooded valley, it flows in a circuitous course near the British fortress called Mounsey or Monceaux Castle, and washes the town of Dulverton. The picturesque situation of this place, overlooked by the fine woods and plantations which adorn the park and demesne of the Earl of Caernarvon, at Pixton, is romantically beautiful. The Exe, increased by the waters of the Barle, now loses its rapid and mountainous character, and glides in a more tranquil stream through verdant meadows, surrounded by a well-cultivated country. The sides of the valley are clothed with woods, which in some places feather down to the very margin of the stream, and in others leave room for a strip of luxuriant meadows. The effect of two fine rivers winding down two parallel valleys surrounded by such a magnificent outline of country, when viewed from the neighbouring heights, is grand and picturesque. After the junction of the two rivers near Exebridge, the Exe enters Devonshire, and flows down the vale, by Tiverton and Exeter, into the estuary of the Exe at Topsham, and into the sea at Exmouth.

The Otter, the Yart and the Culm rise in Somersetshire, and soon flow into Devonshire. The former has its source

near Staple Hill, on part of Blackdown, and becomes the boundary of the county for a short distance below Otterford. The Yart also rises in Staple Hill, and forms the line of division between Otterford and Buckland St. Mary, to Keat's Mills, then the boundary of the county, along the Western side of Whitestanton, where it enters Devonshire, falling into the Axe near Axminster.

Some of these rivers abound with trout, roach and dace, perch, gudgeons, and eels. Pike, carp, and tench were formerly abundant in the marsh rivers, but have nearly disappeared from them. Salmon frequent the Parrett, and salmon-peel the mouths of the smaller rivers flowing into the sea West of the Parrett. The sea shores supply small soles, plaice, and skate; and in the Winter season, herrings, sprats, whiting, and cod are taken at Porlock, Minehead, Weston-super-Mare, and at the Flat and Steep Holmes. Shrimps, with a few prawns and small crabs, are caught on the shore, in pools of water left by the tide. Porpoises, dog-fish, and conger eels are frequent on the coast, and occasionally seals have been seen on the Steep Holmes.

Among the various rivers before mentioned, the chief is the Parrett, which affords navigation by its main course and branches to many towns and places in West Somerset. The coasting and foreign trade at Bridgwater is greatly increasing, and the docks are now being enlarged and altered. This river, with its tributaries, drains much of the moor country. Of the Tone we shall have more to say in our account of the Vale of Taunton Deane, or, more properly, the "Valley of the Tone."

At Chard are two small streams running on either side of the road, which find their ways respectively into the Bristol Channel on the North, and the English Channel on the South.

At one point of the Brendon Hills (near Clatworthy) the river Tone approaches so near one of the feeders of the Exe that it is said the waters of the Tone can be turned into the Exe.

Besides the rivers previously mentioned, there are many smaller streams and rivulets which find their way into these or other rivers, and some which fall directly into the sea.


We have stated in a previous page that some of the streams which take their rise in the hills of the Lias formation possess the strange property of petrifying the wood or other material over which they run. Samples of these curiosities, collected from a neighbouring stream, may be seen at the woodman's cottage, Orchard Woods, near Taunton.

Since the introduction of the drainage of land by means of clay pipes, the rivers have been required to carry off

more water, and at a quicker rate, than formerly. This has caused it to be necessary to lower the channels, increase the widths of the narrow passages, and remove shoals where they may have accumulated; otherwise inundations would have been caused to the surrounding lands.

An Act of Parliament has lately been passed to afford encouragement to the preservation and increase of the various fish with which the rivers were formerly well

stocked, especially salmon, at one time a common article of food in this neighbourhood. The bad custom of allowing the poisonous sewage of towns and factories to drain into and pollute our rivers, together with the want of proper watching to prevent poaching, has in most cases nearly depopulated our waters; but we may now look forward to the time when the Commissioners of the new Act will put things into a different state, and our rivers will again yield a rich harvest to the angler and the fisherman.



### The Source of the River.

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In a wild, tranquil vale, fringed with forests of green,  
Where Nature had fashioned a soft, sylvan scene,  
The retreat of the ringdove, the haunt of the deer,  
The river in silence rolled gentle and clear.

No grandeur of prospect astonished the sight,  
No abruptness sublime mingled awe with delight :  
Here the wild flow'ret blossomed, the elm proudly waved,  
And pure was the current the green bank that laved.

*Washington Irving.*





## The Forests of West Somerset.



CONSIDERABLE portion of this part of the county was soon after the Norman Conquest devoted to forests, for the supply of deer and other game to afford amusement to the King and his barons. The strong passion for the sports of the chase which characterised our Norman monarchs induced them to frame laws for the protection of their forests.

These laws were excessively severe and arbitrary, the King exercising an almost unlimited control over the lives and liberties of both man and beast. In the time of William the Conqueror, and afterwards in that of his son William Rufus, those laws became cruel; and during the reign of Richard I. the following formidable notice was issued by his Chief Justice:—

“That if anyone forfeit to him concerning his venison, or his forest, or anything relative thereto, he is not to trust to this, that he shall be only punished in his goods, as heretofore; for, if after this time anyone forfeit, and be convicted, he shall have full justice done upon him, as was in the time of King Henry, our grandfather; that is, he shall lose his eyes and his virility.”

To protect still further the deer of these royal preserves from molestation by dogs, all persons keeping them within the bounds of the forest were obliged, under a heavy penalty, to “expediate” them; that was, to cut away the balls of their fore feet, and thus render them incapable of pursuing game or hunting the deer.

The principal forests in West Somerset were North Petherton, Neroche and Exmoor. Little now remains of either of them as forests but the name. For many centuries they were most strictly guarded, and numerous

officers were appointed who enjoyed many queer rights and custom. Surveys were ordered at certain periods to ascertain that no infringement had been made upon the boundaries. Perambulations were also insisted upon, as was formerly the custom in each parish.

In the course of time, and as the manners of the people became more enlightened, the strict laws became almost obsolete, and by a statute of the 17th Charles I. it was enacted that no forest where the courts had not been held for sixty years past should be hereafter deemed forest land.

It was formerly the custom to grant certain rights of obtaining fuel from these forests to religious and other houses; thus the Monastery of Buckland, near Durston, had this right from North Petherton forest.

In or near the forest of Neroche (or, as it is now called, Ashill Forest) is the once celebrated mineral water, called Capland Spa, which was discovered in the year 1820. It contains the following chemicals:—Sulphate of soda, carbonate of soda, oxide of iron, muriate of soda, and carbonate of lime. It is called a chalybeate-aperient spring, and its efficacy is proved in all cases of scrofulous, bilious and cutaneous disorders.

The ancient Forest of Exmoor was about 20,000 acres in extent. An Act of Parliament was obtained in 1815 to enclose and cultivate it.

The principal objections to cultivation are, the strong winds and chilly mists which prevail in so elevated a position.

The views from Exmoor are most extensive and beautiful, including a large portion of South Wales, the Bristol Channel, the ancient forest of Exmoor, the moor itself, the

whole range of the Blackdowns, with the Wellington Monument, and far into Devonshire. Opposite are the woods of Nettlecombe, and South of them Willet Tor.

The soil is in general of a fair quality, although, the hard sandstones below the surface being little liable to decompose, somewhat unfavourable to fertility. Extensive tracts, however, still remain, both in the forest and surrounding highlands, in a state of nature, delighting the eye by the grandeur of their unbroken outline and the rich beauty of their colour; and here, over slopes of heather, interspersed with the dwarf juniper, cranberry, and whortleberry, roams the "Exmoor pony"—a breed of the native English horse, carefully preserved. The red forest deer still makes its lair in the extensive covers on the moor side.

Since the year 1841 the farms have been chiefly under the management of Mr. Robert Smith, the resident agent of Mr. Frederick Knight, and under his superintendence upwards of 4,000 acres have been let on lease, in addition to the land previously occupied.

The water-meadows made by this gentleman are parti-

cularly worthy the attention of those interested in agriculture. But the farmer is now likely to be driven by the miner from his settlement on Exmoor.

In 1851 a specimen of the white carbonate of iron was sent by Mr. R. Smith to the Great Exhibition. Its value suggested the expediency of a further search, and this led to the discovery of abundant iron lodes, including the hematites and other ores, hitherto supposed to be peculiar to Staffordshire and Wales.

Large districts of the moor are now in the hands of two of the principal iron companies in the kingdom, viz., the Ulverstone, of Lancashire, and the Dowlais and Plymouth, of South Wales. Their steam-machinery is expected to raise about 300,000 tons of iron ore annually.

Two lines for a mineral railway have been surveyed—one to Porlock, and the other to Lynton.

A new church has lately been erected on this romantic spot.

Full particulars, with a copy of the ancient survey of the Forests of Somerset, may be found in Phelps' history of this County, published in 1836.

### Sacred Melody in the Forest.

With sonorous notes  
Of every tone, mixed in confusion sweet,  
All chanted in the fullness of delight,  
The forest rings. Where, far around inclosed  
With bushy sides, and covered high above  
With foliage thick, supported by bare trunks,  
Like pillars rising to support a roof,  
It seems a temple vast, the space within  
Rings loud and clear with thrilling melody.

*Wilcox.*

# The Moors of West Somerset.



THE moors of this neighbourhood are King's Sedgmoor, East of Bridgwater; East Sedgmoor, between Wells and Glastonbury; West Sedgmoor, between Taunton and Langport; Stanmoor, Warmoor, Westwall, and Northmoor, on the North side of West Sedgmoor, near the Isle of Athelney; Aller-moor, near Langport; West-moor, Curry-moor, and Hay-moor, near North Curry.

By Act of Parliament, the Commissioners have the power to make new cuts, remove impediments and nuisances, also to deepen and widen the present channels, and to levy a rate on the proprietors of lands receiving benefit, to defray the absolute expenses incurred; also to appoint dyke reeves and other officers to inspect the different rivers, rhines, and water-courses in the several parishes, and to report to the court, at their periodical sessions, the state and condition of the same.

These sessions are held at Langport and Bridgwater, generally in the Spring and Autumn of each year.

Portions of this county at an early period of its history experienced great inconvenience from "the plague of waters." Agues, fevers and other diseases arising from marsh miasmata were the constant pest of the country, and rendered a residence in these low marshy situations highly prejudicial to the health of its inhabitants.

This circumstance engaged the attention of the King, and in the year 1304 (32 Edw. I.) a Commission was issued under the Great Seal of England for its prevention. Many other Acts have been passed for the same purpose.

By the old law the Commissioners were bound to follow the course of the ancient rivers, dykes and ditches. These,

from the lapse of time, inclosures and new drains connected therewith, were found to be sometimes inconvenient and almost useless.

The following is an extract from Phelps' History of Somerset:—

These moors and peat bogs were provincially called Turbaries. All these, from their appearance, seem to have been, in ages long since passed by, estuaries of the sea, and to have been filled up by the deposit of the sea, the growth of aquatic vegetables, and by the alluvial matter brought down from the high lands by the rivers in floods. The strata, when dug through for obtaining proper foundations for building bridges and in excavating canals and other works, exhibits traces of successive accumulations of marine and fresh water deposits; and the horns and bones of deer and other animals found at a considerable depth below the present surface attest the fact.

These moors are in general on a level with the sea at high water, in ordinary tides, and considerably below it during the high spring and equinoctial tides. They are secured from inundation by strong banks, called sea walls, extending along the shore of the Bristol Channel and the sides of the rivers, whose mouths are secured by sluices and flood-gates against the influx of the tide. The moors are now enumerated as a matter of historical curiosity since the traces of the morasses are rapidly disappearing, and luxuriant meadows and pastures are succeeding these barren wastes. The country is now intersected by good roads, and the health of the inhabitants has greatly improved.

King's Sedgmoor is a name given to a large tract of

low land, extending East from Bridgwater, and bounded by Polden Hill on the North, Compton Dundon on the East, High Ham Hill on the South, and the parishes of Chedzoy and Bawdrip on the West, and it contains 13,522 acres.

About the year 1610 King James laid a claim to the soil of the moor, and formed a design of improving it by a complete drainage. So averse were the owners of the adjacent lordships communing with their cattle on it, that they opposed with all their power the scheme. Finding, however, that they could make no good title to the right of depasturing their cattle by usage, they proposed to allow the King four thousand acres, in lieu of his claim, and to lay out the residue, being 9,522 acres, among the different lords claiming right therein. King James dying before the acceptance of the proposal, the lords renewed their application to King Charles I., who accepted the four thousand acres of land in lieu of his claim for the soil, to be held by his Majesty, his heirs, successors, and assigns; and the remainder was allotted to the different lords of the manors and their tenants.

In the reign of William III. an Act was obtained for draining this large tract of land; but by some means its operation was frustrated. In 1775 Mr. Allen, then Member for Bridgwater, revived the subject, with a fair prospect of success, but was unable to stem the opposition made to the measure in Parliament, and failed in his object. In 1778 another attempt was made, and after much opposition, by persevering industry and good management, a Bill was carried for "draining and dividing the said moor into parochial allotments" (thirty in number). In the Spring of 1791 it became a law, and was acted upon immediately. The expense of this undertaking, according to the accounts of the Commissioners, was £31,624 4s. 8d.

The next tract of marsh land is situated along the South bank of the river Tone, immediately above its junction with the Parret, and comprises several large moors, called by different names, from the adjoining villages. In the centre of these moors, on a gentle eminence, are situated North Curry and Stoke St. Gregory, both large parishes, which include these moors, except a portion in the South, divided into allotments, belonging to several neighbouring parishes, which had rights of common over them. These lands are overflowed during the Winter, and the water frequently remains many weeks, in consequence of the surface being scarcely above the bed of the adjoining rivers. The same effect is produced over a large tract called Aller Moor, on the East of the river Parret, and the lands suffer great injury from it. The tide generally rises many feet above the adjoining lands, being retained in the

channel of the river by high and substantial banks on each side.

After passing Langport Bridge, an extensive tract of low marsh land is found along the banks of the rivers Parret, Ivel and Ile. These are all liable to frequent floods, from the want of a sufficient outlet for the water of an immense district, comprising the larger portion of the South of the county, extending from Milborne Port on the East, to Wiveliscombe on the West, two points forty miles distant from each other, and of the medium breadth of twelve miles. All the water which falls within these limits finds its way to Langport and Borough Bridge. If, therefore, after heavy sudden rains throughout this district, the flood waters meet the tide rising, or at high water, they immediately overflow the banks and fall into the low lands, where they remain for weeks, nay months, to the great injury of the farmers. There is no possibility of its subsiding till the waters of the higher level have passed off through the river to the sea.

Within the past few years a considerable amount has been expended in the improvement of the drainage of the moors of West Somerset. Separate drainage districts have been formed, powerful pumps worked by steam power have been erected, and the water is now discharged into the Parret, the Tone, and other streams, in great quantities.

In erecting the buildings to receive the machinery, the foundations had in several cases to be carried to a considerable depth, and "piles" upwards of 30 feet in length to be driven down to find a safe bottom. It would appear that the constant growth of vegetable matter and the sand washed from the higher lands have gradually, but surely, raised the soil; so that now some of the moor land is among the richest in England. Large quantities of poor cattle and other stock are sent there to be prepared for the London and other markets.

Many antiquities have at various times been found in the moors, particularly on the blood-stained field of Sedgemoor, where, in 1685, a celebrated battle was fought.

Many of these curiosities, together with those of the stone and bronze age, were formerly collected by the late Mr. Stradling, and are now deposited in the Museum of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society, at Taunton.

Occasionally, when these moors are flooded, and a severe frost follows, they are converted into extensive fields of ice, and afford considerable amusement to those dwelling in the neighbourhood, although a great inconvenience to the tenants.

A lengthy account on subjects connected with the moors may be found published in the Proceedings of the before-named Society, especially in their fourth volume.

# West Somerset.

## Mines, Minerals, Soil, and Waters.



ANY parts of West Somerset abound in minerals of several varieties.

From the Brendon Hills are extracted haematite iron ore, manganese and cobalt. The former is sent in large quantities to South Wales.

Phelps states that "copper ore is found in the Eastern side of the Quantock Hills, at Doddington, near Stowey, where a mine was worked in 1820, and produced rich ore, with fine specimens of the oxides of copper. A steam-engine was erected, and a considerable sum expended in works necessary for carrying on the concern with spirit. After a trial of the veins for some time, the returns of ore were not sufficient to reimburse the expense to the proprietors, when the workings were given up and abandoned."

A similar attempt was made a few years ago in the parish of Broomfield, on the Southern side of these hills, and it ended in the same manner.

Lead has also been found in the Quantock Hills.

Several endeavours to find coal have been made in the neighbourhood of Chard. At one time a promise seemed to be held out that a very large quantity would be available, and that Chard would become a highly important manufacturing place.

Chalk is found at Whitedown, near Crewkerne, and we have seen it stated that it has been discovered in the Blackdown range, but have much doubt of it.

Argillaceous beds of lias abound near Watchet and Blue Anchor.

The mountain limestone appears at Woodspring.

Magnesian limestone at Cannington Park, and at Thorn St. Margaret, near Wellington.

Conglomerate rock may be seen at various places in the Quantock and Brendon Hills, where it is burnt into lime for agricultural purposes.

The grauwacke formation predominates also in the Quantock Hills, and at Exmoor.

The killas, or clay slate, is found at Okehampton, Treborough, and at Trace Bridge, near Ashbrittle, where it is worked for paving and roofing slates.

Granite, as we have already mentioned, has been discovered at Hestercombe, near Taunton, and at Quantock Lodge, the residence of Lord Taunton.

Fossils abound in the different strata, and fine specimens of the saurian tribe have been found in the blue lias beds at Stoke St. Mary.

Under the moors and the courses of some of the rivers are found the alluvial deposits; and here are seen the peat beds, and the fossil remains of ancient woods, chiefly of oak.

Throughout the rich valleys of West Somerset may occasionally be seen masses of the new red sandstone, and on the sterile heights of Exmoor blocks of the old red sandstone.

On the rocks near Porlock silver in small quantities has been discovered.

On the sea coast some of the rocks contain alabaster, talc and marble.

Collinson states that many of the rocks in the inland portion are composed of limestone, which contain pyrites, spar lava, and curious petrifications.

Building stone of various descriptions is common throughout the neighbourhood.

An interesting account on this subject has been published in the 2nd vol. of the Somerset Archaeological Society's Proceedings, by the late Mr. W. Baker.

West Somerset has not much to boast of in the way of Mineral Waters, or Holy Wells. There are, however, a few that deserve a passing notice.

Capland Spa, near the ancient forest of Neroche, has already been noticed. It is situated in the parish of Broadway, six and a half miles from Taunton and five from Ilminster. The water has a bluish hue, and there is no deposit. It corrodes iron very fast. It was formerly in great demand, considerable quantities being sent around the country. It is said to be in quality much as the Cheltenham waters. There is a mineral spring situated at Horton, near Ilminster, and another at Dillington, in the same neighbourhood, but we are not aware that they are taken medicinally.

The waters of Burnham have for many years been noted for their curative qualities, and are often used by invalids; but, although not far from us, this place is now classed as in Mid-Somerset. The same remark will apply to Glastonbury, North Brook, or the Holy-well, and Edington. Stogumber contains a fine spring of delicious water, containing medicinal properties, and is used in the manufacture of the celebrated pale ale, recommended to invalids and others requiring tonics.

The water of Holwell Cavern, in the parish of Broomfield, possesses peculiar properties. Many interesting experiments were tried, and a most interesting account of them was written by the late celebrated Andrew Crosse, the electrician. (See Som. Arch. Pro., vol. 2.)

Near Cothelstone old Manor House is a fine spring of water, said to have been named St. Agnes' Well, and to have possessed excellent curative and cooling properties.

At Wilton, or anciently Welltown, near Taunton, was formerly a noted spring called Fons George, or St. George's Well, to which the afflicted were accustomed to resort, and which tradition reports to have worked many marvellous cures. The site of this well seems now uncertain.

At Crowcombe, at the foot of the Quantock hills, is a spring which is said to ebb and flow, but we are not able to verify the fact.

The waters which issue from the Blackdown Hills pass through a bed of sand, and are noted for their soft and pleasant nature.

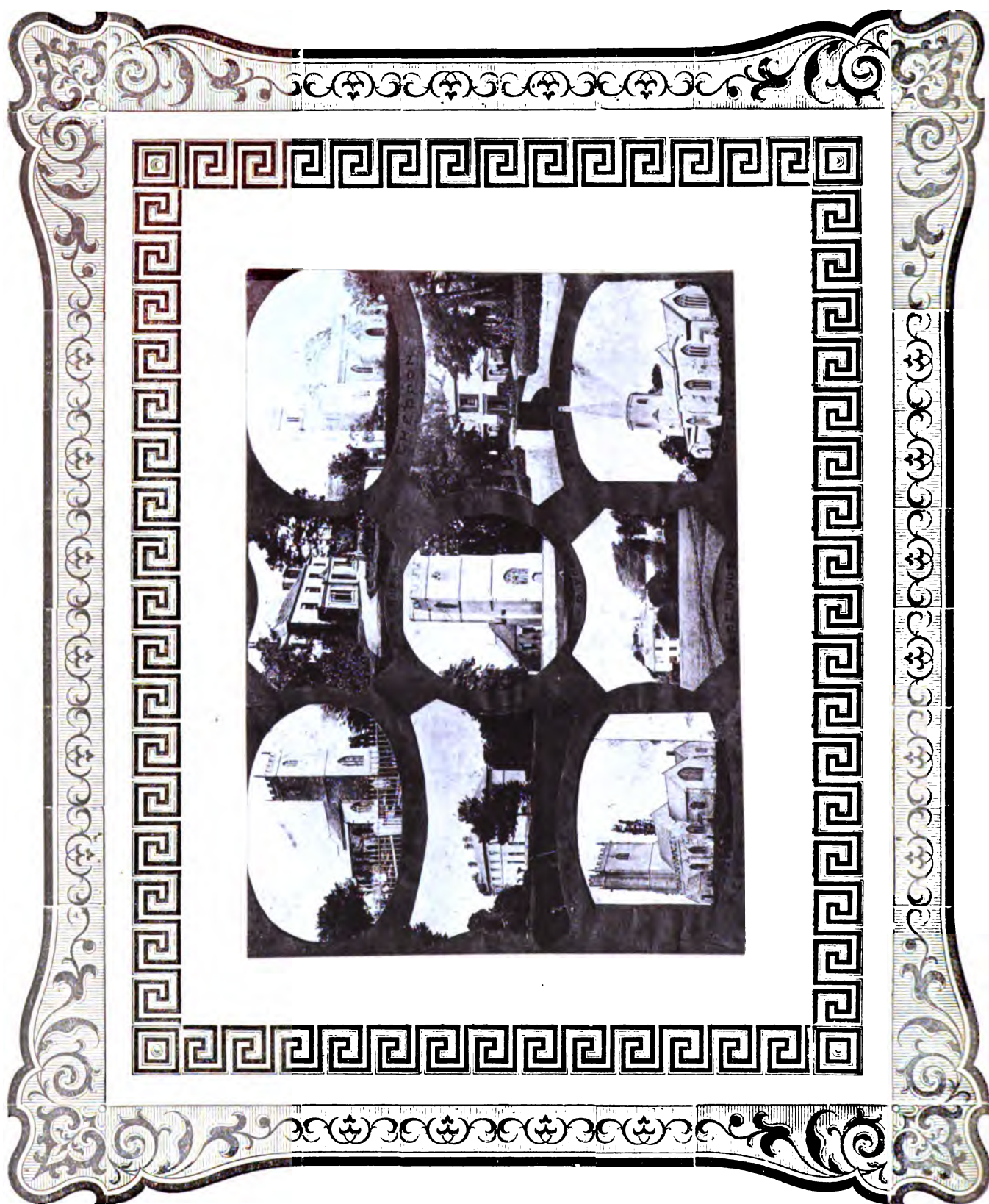
We have already referred to the petrifying streams which run from the neighbourhood of Thurlbear, on the lias formation, which possess that strange property.

These are probably all the waters of West Somerset that require particular notice. Other parts of the county, especially the neighbourhood of Bath, contain springs that have for ages been celebrated, and have done much to promote the growth and prosperity of these places.












# West Somerset.

## Ecclesiastical Matters.

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IN the year 596 the famous Austin, the monk, was sent over to this country from Rome to attempt the conversion of England. King Ethelbert kindly received him. In a short time the greater part of the country embraced Christianity. When the news of Austin's success reached Rome, more missionaries were sent, and a model for the government of the infant church was established.

In the course of the 7th century many monasteries were founded in all parts of England. They were designed, at first, for the seats of bishops and their clergy, for the residence of secular priests, who preached and administered the sacrament over all the neighbouring country; and in all places they were seminaries of learning for educating the youth. No vows of celibacy or poverty were at first required of the priests inhabiting these monasteries; but they were soon after recommended and enjoined by successive popes and metropolitans. The monasteries being richly endowed, drew such numbers to enjoy in them a lazy, comfortable life, that they soon became intolerable evils to the commonalty.

An improved system of music was introduced into churches in the course of the following centuries. The private devotions of the good people of those times almost entirely consisted in singing a prodigious number of psalms, as the most effectual way of appeasing the wrath of heaven and atoning for their own sins, or those of their friends, either living or dead. It was an article in these voluntary associations, called guilds, or fraternities, among the Anglo-Saxons, that each member should sing two psalms every

day—one for the living members of the fraternity, another for all who had been members, but were dead—and that at the death of a member each surviving member should sing six psalms for the repose of his soul. Most of those who could afford the expense of learning music either went to Rome or sent their sons thither and the clergyman who sung best was accounted the most useful theologian. Penances were strictly enjoined by the canons of several successive councils, and their degrees determined with the greatest precision. Long fastings of several years were prescribed as the proper penances for many offences; but these fastings were not so formidable as they appeared at first sight, especially to the rich, as a year's fasting might be redeemed for thirty shillings, equal in quantity of silver to £4 10s. of our money, and in value to thirty pounds.

At the accession of the great Alfred, A.D. 871, there was hardly a person to the south of the Humber who understood the common prayers of the church, or who was capable of translating a single sentence of Latin into English. The Venerable Bede was a brilliant exception to the general ignorance which then prevailed. He lived and died an humble retired monk, unambitious of ecclesiastical preferment, dedicating his whole life to religious and literary subjects, and was possessed of all the learning of his time. His ecclesiastical history is the only performance that throws any light on the religious and literary state of his country in the times preceding the Saxon conquests down to his own era.

The great Alfred was the most learned prince in Europe, and made every effort to introduce literature and the

sciences among his subjects; and, by his continued and unremitting efforts to introduce learning, he succeeded so effectually that before the end of his illustrious reign he could boast that all his bishops' sees were filled with learned prelates, and every pulpit with a good preacher.

In the year 910 King Edward, in defiance of the Church of Rome, convened a synod of his clergy and nobles, and issued an edict to divide the extensive diocese of Sherborne, and erect out of it three new bishoprics, viz., Wells, Sarum and Exeter, assigning to Wells the county of Somerset for its diocese and jurisdiction; to Wilton the county of Wilts; and to Exeter, Devonshire and Cornwall.

The whole kingdom became at length divided into parishes, not by any legislative enactment or general regulation, but gradually and according to the disposition and circumstances of the various owners of estates; and this furnishes a reason for the singular forms and unequal extent of parishes in England.

In A.D. 1392 a power was given to the bishop, when any appropriation of a benefice was made to a monastery, to allot, according to the extent of the parish, or its value, certain lands, the produce of which would be sufficient to maintain the vicar and enable him to keep hospitality.

Parochial churches had become general, the simple and primitive edifices built by the Saxons and Anglo-Normans having been enlarged and rendered more commodious for the use of the congregations.

There were many religious houses in West Somerset; in fact, the county abounded with monastic institutions, having at the time of the Dissolution of religious houses six abbeys, fifteen priories, three nunneries, one preceptory

of knights hospitallers, three colleges, and six hospitals, besides many other lesser houses.

The net annual income of the whole was £7,487 18s. 7½d., besides a vast treasure in gold, silver, precious stones and furniture.

On the suppression of the religious houses the country was over-run with vagrants, who subsisted by begging or robbing and plundering all they met, whether in woods or on the highways; and no less than 73,000 persons were capitally convicted and executed in the reign of Henry VIII. To prevent indeed, if possible, the persons supported formerly by the monasteries, &c., from being thrown upon the public, large quantities of church lands had been sold at easy rates to enable the purchasers to keep up the wonted hospitality; and to enforce this duty, a penalty of £6 13s. 4d. per month was imposed on the violators of this engagement; but the measure failed, and another attempt was made in 1536 to lay the burden upon the parochial clergy, every parish priest being obliged to devote a large portion of his income to repairing the church and supporting the poor. But this plan also proved abortive, and it was at last judged proper to compel the parish where the poor were born to support them, which was done in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and continued to be the law of the land until the year 1834, when some material alterations on the poor-laws were effected by the ministry.

West Somerset is in the archdeaconry of Taunton, in the bishopric of Bath and Wells, and in the province of Canterbury.

The archdeaconry of Taunton consists of four deaneries—Bridgwater, Crewkerne, Dunster and Taunton.

The archdeacon (the Ven. A. Danison) has a registry at Taunton.



# West Somerset.

## Churches and Towers.



**I**N writing on these subjects we can but give *general* descriptions. We presume that every one who has any knowledge of these beautiful and interesting edifices is aware that our county stands high in the estimation of critics for the number and magnificence of its parish churches and handsome towers.

On the latter subject the respected vicar of Bishop's Lydeard thus speaks:—"Of all the varied beauties of the county we inhabit, none, perhaps, is more striking to the eye of the traveller, or more essentially connected in the mind of the native with its scenery, than the church towers. The two splendid towers of Taunton, and those of Norton, Bradford, North Curry, Lyng and Wellington, cannot fail to attract the notice of every passenger by the Bristol and Exeter Railway; while to the native who meets with them, now backed by the hill-side, now breaking the level monotony of wide-stretched moor, now buried among the dark green foliage of surrounding elms, or rising in calm majesty amidst undulating corn-fields and richly verdant meadows, they become as much a part of the scenery, which, perhaps, without his knowing it, is almost necessary to his comfort, as the hills, fields and meadows themselves; and if his thoughts lead him deeper than mere impressions, he cannot but confess that they are not only calculated to raise his mind to higher and holier things than those of this world, but are also proofs of the gratitude of those who erected them to that Almighty Being who has given to the inhabitants of this favoured district all things richly to enjoy."

The following is Phelps's opinion on this subject:—

"The rebuilding of towers was another elegant mode of beautifying our churches, which is eminently conspicuous in this county. These appendages to our ecclesiastical buildings give so decided a character to the Somersetshire churches that they are scarcely equalled for architectural elegance in any one part of the kingdom. This may be attributed to the munificence of the bishops, abbots and priors of the rich monastic institutions and ecclesiastical establishments in this county."

Warton states that Somersetshire, in the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, was strongly attached to the Lancastrian side. In return for this service the Duke of Lancaster, when he came to the throne as Henry VII., rebuilt their churches; and he adds that most of the churches of this reign are known, besides other distinguishing marks, by latticed battlements and broad open windows, and instances the churches and towers of Taunton.

We may be allowed to add that some who are well acquainted with the subject now entertain a doubt respecting the statement as to Henry VII.

Some of these beautiful edifices are, no doubt, of early date; but by far the greater number are of that style which Rickman has called "Perpendicular;" and of them the majority are comparatively of late date in the style, having been built or modernized in the reigns of the two first monarchs of the Tudor dynasty, though, no doubt, many of them are somewhat earlier.

We may be allowed to caution those who desire to investigate this interesting subject as to the authors they select; for until the last few years even the outlines were not

understood by any, and many and amusingly erroneous are the opinions launched by writers who on other matters may be well qualified to give well-written descriptions.

The past two or three centuries were "the dark ages" of Gothic architecture; but since the revival of a taste for mediæval works, and a search for a pure and correct style, things have much improved, and at this time most of our parish churches have undergone some attempt at restoration.

The earliest churches that were built in this land were probably of wood or wicker-work, and the form either that of a cross or a copy of the Roman temple. We cannot expect to find relics of buildings erected with such materials; but a few of our oldest churches yet bear testimony to the strength and beauty of that style known as the Saxon.

To those who wish for further information on this subject, we would recommend a paper published in the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archæological Society for the year 1861, by the Rev. F. Warre.

When the Normans took possession of this land great changes were made in ecclesiastical architecture, and the churches of West Somerset underwent considerable alteration. In our description of the various parishes of this neighbourhood we propose to point out the peculiarities of each church.

William I., says a modern writer, and his successors, strewed the kingdom with ecclesiastical buildings, and wherever Norman barons settled they erected and endowed churches, to conciliate the favour of those saints to whom these churches were dedicated, and through whose intercession they might have a long and prosperous possession. Monasteries were founded, and parish churches soon followed, built and endowed by the earliest Norman possessors, or their immediate descendants.

Most of our readers are doubtless aware that each succeeding age or century brought a change in the style of architecture, and that the age of a building can generally be pretty well determined by the style in which it was erected.

It was the custom to rebuild, or make additions in the style of architecture in vogue at the time of execution; consequently many of our older churches contain a great variety of styles.

During the 12th and 13th centuries many of these changes took place, and that beautiful style was introduced known as "the Early-English," which was noted for its correctness and simplicity. We have a few examples of this style in West Somerset.

We may remind our readers that in very early times the churches were often used as places of defence; conse-

quently the walls were massive and the windows small and well guarded; but as the country became less liable to invasion, and the use of glass more general, so the windows became larger, until they were at length filled with beautiful tracery and painted or stained glass.

As time went on, magnificence and splendour were sought for, until, in the 14th century, a more ornamental style was reached. Here, again, West Somerset cannot boast of possessing many examples, as it was in the following century that so many of the churches of this neighbourhood were erected. Very few of our ecclesiastical buildings are without a considerable portion of "Perpendicular" work. In this style most of those churches of which we are so justly proud were erected.

Mr. Freeman has written much on the architecture of this period, and to his writings we would refer those who desire full information. The volume of the Somersetshire Archæological Society for the year 1861 contains many particulars. That gentleman says:—

"The strength of Somersetshire lies in its parish churches. It is not indeed entirely denuded of conventual remains; but monastic ruins, much less monastic churches retained for parochial purposes, do not seem to be a striking feature in its architectural wealth. The grand buildings which I am best acquainted with are all of the strictly parochial type, although they occasionally approach in size and splendour to the dignity of cathedral or conventual buildings, and, moreover, belong to a style in which the two types of the minster and the parish church run much more into one another than was usual at an earlier period. At the same time, it is an honourable fact for the local architecture that it admitted of having churches of the cathedral type erected in it—a circumstance probably occurring nowhere else.

"Previous to the Perpendicular period, the churches of Somersetshire appear to have been, for the most part, structures of no very great pretensions. They seem to have been usually without clerestories, and, I suspect, very frequently without aisles. This I infer from the arcade being almost always Perpendicular. We can hardly suppose that earlier arcades would have been so generally destroyed, had they ever existed. They were frequently cruciform, and have transmitted the use of that shape to some complete churches of the Perpendicular period, at which time I need not say it was very seldom employed in original designs. In some parts an octagonal tower, sometimes central, sometimes at one side, appears to have been frequent. The square western tower, when it existed, seems to have been very small and plain, as at Wilton and Trull.

"The typical Somersetshire Perpendicular church con-

sists of a lofty and elaborate western tower, standing disengaged from the aisles; a nave and aisles, with or without a clerestory, according to circumstances, with very commonly a large southern porch as high as the aisles; a high-roofed and comparatively insignificant chancel, containing traces, more or less extensive, of earlier work, but with Perpendicular chapels on each side. Transepts are not uncommon, but cannot be called typical. The roofs are of various kinds, but different forms of the coved roof are typical here, as in the rest of the West of England and South Wales. The interiors are rich in screens and other kinds of wood-work.

"One would have thought that it could need no argument to prove that a grand Perpendicular tower ranked among the noblest triumphs of architectural skill, and

that it was among the greatest boasts of England in general, and of Somersetshire in particular, to have brought so glorious a feature to perfection."

After "the Perpendicular style," ornament and decoration were again sought, until the churches "blazed with gorgeousness."

From the time of the Reformation to within the last few years little or nothing was built worthy of admiration, but, on the contrary, buildings in the most depraved taste were erected, as bad as ever disgraced a civilised country. Thanks to the researches of Pugin, Britton, Ruskin, Scott, and others of the modern school, we have again before us many of those beautiful edifices of which our forefathers were so justly proud, and which are at once the glory of our country and the bulwarks of our native land.

"Walk about Sion, go round about her, and tell the towers thereof.

"Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses, that ye may tell them that come after."

Psalm xlviii.

"The temples of His grace,  
How beautiful they stand;  
The honours of our native place,  
The bulwarks of our land.  
Oft have our fathers told,  
Our eyes have often seen,  
How well THE LORD secures the fold  
Where HIS own sheep have been."

# West Somerset.

## Military Matters.



IN writing on this subject, it may be expected that we should furnish our readers with an account of the ancient Castles of this part of the county. They are so "few and far between" that we are unable to find any list of them in the various histories that have been published. The following brief particulars may, however, prove of some interest:—

Bridgwater Castle, built by William de Briere, 1202, was long since destroyed, with the exception of the water-gate and some other fragments forming the wall of a stable in Castle-street, and the bonded cellars at the Custom-house. At the time of the Rebellion this castle was one of the strongest in the kingdom. It mounted 40 guns, and was surrounded by a moat filled with water from the Parret; and in 1645, under its governor, Colonel Wyndham, it withstood for some time a siege by Fairfax, who ultimately destroyed it, together with the greater part of the town.

Dunster Castle is generally considered as a baronial residence. It was an ancient seat of the Mohuns, and of the Luttrells from the reign of Henry VII., and crowns the Tor where it slopes to the valley of Avill, in full view of the wild height of Grabhurst, of the sea-coast, and of the beautiful castle park. Its foundation dates from a time before the Conqueror, in whose reign it was rebuilt by the first William de Mohun; but of the Norman structure the iron-studded door and ruinous tower at the entrance are the only remains. The present edifice was erected in 1580, the time of Elizabeth, excepting the great gateway, which is as old as Edward III. The chief events which have passed here are the capture of the

castle by the Marquis of Hartford, in 1643; the visit of Charles II., when Colonel Wyndham was the governor; the subsequent successful siege by Blake; and the confinement here of William Prynne, member of the Long Parliament, by Cromwell, 1648.

Taunton Castle owed its origin to a Saxon king, but the greater part of Ina's Castle was rebuilt at the Conquest by a bishop of Winchester, to whose see the estate then belonged. The remains at the present day consist principally of a round tower; an embattled gateway, with groove for the portcullis; the hall, long used as the Assize Hall; and the W. wing, which is supposed to have been the site of Ina's building. On the exterior of the hall are the arms of the bishop of Winchester, with the date 1577—probably a year when the structure was repaired—and over the archways of the castle entrance is the escutcheon of Henry VII., supported by a greyhound and a wivern, and that again of the bishop, with the date 1496, and inscription "Laus tibi Christe. Langto Winto." The hall is a noble room, 119 feet in length by 30 in width. It was repaired, together with other parts of the castle, at the close of the last century, by Sir Benjamin Hammett, many years M.P. for Taunton. Further particulars will be given hereafter.

At Stoke-Courcy the remains of a moated castle may yet be seen.

This country has so long enjoyed the blessings of civil peace that it is almost difficult to picture to ourselves the steps our forefathers took to arrive at so desirable an end.

Phelps, in his History of Somerset, gives some interesting particulars, from which we extract what is suitable.

"In the time of the Anglo-Saxons every freeman of an

age capable of bearing arms, and not incapacitated by bodily infirmity, was compelled to join the army in case of invasion by a foreign enemy, civil commotion, or any emergency endangering the peace and safety of the kingdom, this being one of the three services comprised in the *trinoda necessitas*, which required every man to attend personally in war, for the defence of the kingdom; to work at and contribute to the building of the public castles and fortresses, and the repairing of highways and bridges."

Every landholder was obliged to keep armour and weapons, according to his rank and possessions, by the statute of 13 Edward I.; and his people were to be trained to the use of arms at stated times in the year, while once a-year a general inspection of arms was made throughout each county.

Historians inform us that the Great Alfred caused all his male subjects to be trained in the art of war.

Upon the Norman Conquest the feudal laws were introduced in this country, the whole of which were formed upon a military plan. All the lands of the kingdom were divided into knights' fees, which amounted to more than 60,000; and for every knight's fee the knight was obliged to hold himself in readiness, with horse and arms, to serve the King in his wars, either at home or abroad, at his own expense, for a stated time, generally for forty days in a year; and thus a military force of 60,000 men was always ready to obey the orders of the Sovereign. Each knight was also to have a coat of mail, a helmet, a shield and a lance, and every knight as many coats of mail, helmets, shields and lances, as he might have knights' fees in his domain.

This military service in the course of time became commuted into a pecuniary payment, and at last was abolished by the statute of 12th Charles II., cap. 24.

**TRAINED BANDS.**—This was a military force enrolled for the defence of the kingdom by the King, and solely at his disposal. It was raised according to the extent and population of each county. The number in England amounted to upwards of 120,000 men.

Soon after the Restoration of Charles II., when military and feudal tenures were abolished, it was deemed advisable to ascertain the power of the militia, to recognise the sole right of the Crown to govern and command it, and to put the whole into a more regular method of military subordination; and thus a national militia was established and declared by Act of Parliament to be under the immediate orders of the King, who nominates the Lord-Lieutenants of the several counties. This officer appoints his deputies, who are bound to obey all orders they receive from their principal. The Lord-Lieutenants have the power of granting commissions of colonel and all the subordinate officers, who are to command this national force, under certain regulations with respect to property and real estate."

At the present time, as our readers are aware, our principal local military force is as follows:—The 1st Somerset Militia, head-quarters Taunton Barracks, nearly 1,000 strong. The West Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry, head-quarters Taunton, exercise generally at Orchard Portman, on the Chard road, consists of 8 troops, generally 400 to 500 strong. There is a small muster of Pensioners, at stated times, at Taunton Barracks. Last, but not least, is the lately-formed Volunteer Rifle Corps, whose numbers for 1867 may be thus given:—3rd, Taunton, 101; 5th, Bridgewater, 159; 8th, Wellington, 75; 9th, Williton, 65; 11th, Stogursey, 74; 12th, Wiveliscombe, 79; 16th, Yeovil, 87; 20th, Crewkerne, 88; 21st, Langport, 60; 26th, Bridgewater, 201; total, 989.

# West Somerset.

## Parliamentary Matters.



HELPS states that "The origin of a legislative assembly in Britain can be traced to a very early period of its history, and may be referred to the *Commune Concilium* of England, which chose Cassivellanus as chief or president, and is alluded to by Julius Cæsar in his Commentaries. This court is designated in the ancient records of the Britons by the name of *Kyfr-y-then*, and by the Saxons *Wittena-gemote*; and had assumed in the time of Edward the Confessor the name of Parliament.

"That this was a representative assembly elected by the people is proved by the Saxon view of Frank-pledge, and that not only the legislative body, but every executive officer, from the Tithing-man to the Ealder-man, or chief magistrate of the county, was elected by the respective hundreds annually assembled in the county court. In the time of Henry III. four representatives were elected for each county, and the electors were persons paying scot and lot

"The boroughs in Somersetshire were Axbridge, Bath city, Bridgwater, Chard, Dunster, Glastonbury, Ilchester, Langport, Milborne Port, Montacute, Stoke-Courcy, Taunton, Watchet, Weare and Wells city. These returned two members each, 'who were to have allowed their reasonable expenses in going to, and returning, and for remaining to transact the said business in the Parliament then assembled.' In the year A.D. 1201 a statute for levying these expenses was enacted. A few years afterwards the representation assumed a more regular form, and writs were issued to different

cities and boroughs, to return representatives to Parliament, according to the usual custom of the electors paying scot and lot, which continued to the year 1832, except where it had been altered by the acceptance of a charter, or by the resolutions of the House of Commons. In the time of Edward I. the following cities and boroughs in Somersetshire returned two members each to Parliament, viz., Axbridge, Bath, Bridgwater, Chard, Ilchester, Langport, Montacute, Milborne Port, Taunton, Watchet, Weare and Wells city. In the reign of Edward II. writs were not issued to the boroughs of Langport, Montacute and Weare; but a writ was sent to the town of Wellington. In the time of Henry VI. the qualification for the elective franchise for knights of the shire was altered, and confined to freeholders possessing a freehold of the value of forty shillings per annum. Minehead was created a borough in the time of Queen Elizabeth."

Previous to the Reform Bill of 1832 the following was the number of members of Parliament returned for the whole of this county:—For the shire, 2; Bath, 2; Bridgwater, 2; Bristol, 2; Ilchester, 2; Milborne Port, 2; Minehead, 2; Taunton, 2; Wells, 2; total, 18. After the passing of this bill East Somerset returned 2; West Somerset, 2; Bath, 2; Wells, 2; Bridgwater, 2; Taunton, 2; Frome, 1; total, 13.

We understand that the Reform Bill of 1867 divides the county of Somerset into three instead of two electoral districts. The new divisions are thus constituted in the schedule thereto:—1. *East Somerset* consists of "the existing sessional divisions of Long Ashton, Keynsham, Weston, Axbridge and Temple Cloud, as established by



virtue of the order of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the county of Somerset, and also all such other places in the said county as are locally situated within, or are surrounded by, the said sessional divisions, or any of them, and are not mentioned in the said order." The place appointed for holding the Court for the election of members for this division is Bath."—2. *Mid Somerset* comprises "the existing sessional divisions of Crewkerne, Yeovil, Somerton, Shepton Mallet, Wincanton, Wells, Frome and Kilmerdon," and all other places locally situated within the said sessional divisions as specified in the preceding paragraph. The place appointed for holding the Court for the election of members is the city of Wells.—3. *West Somerset* comprises "the existing petty sessional divisions of Dunster, Dulverton, Williton, Wiveliscombe, Bishop's Lydeard, Wellington, Taunton, Bridgwater and Ilminster," and all other places within the said divisions as specified in the first paragraph. The place for holding the Court for the election of members is Taunton. These arrangements are described in the schedule as "temporary," because the Boundary Commissioners appointed by the Act are directed (*inter alia*) to "inquire into the divisions of counties as constituted by this Act, and as to the places

appointed for holding Courts for the election of members for such divisions, with a view to ascertain whether, having regard to the natural and legal divisions of each county and the distribution of the population therein, any and what alterations shall be made in such divisions or places." The populations of the three divisions, according to the last census, are—East Somerset, 104,313; Mid Somerset, 111,538; West Somerset, 116,412.

A list of the members of Parliament for this county from the year 1298 to 1790 will be found in Collinson's *History of Somerset*, vol. 1, page 29. It is continued to the year 1835 in Phelps' *History*, page 62. The history of each returning place will probably furnish the list of the members of each town or city.

The following names appear in the list, and may be still recognised as borne by their descendants, or at least are yet well known:—Bere, Popham, Everard, Bluett, Luttrell, Ford, Stradling, Marshall, Berkeley, Hill, Sydenham, Rogers, Walsh, Speke, Dyer, Portman, Phelps, Blake, Buckland, Hunt, Warre, Trevelyan, Palmer, Pigot, Wyndham, Tynte, Acland, Coxe, Langton, Dickinson, Lethbridge, Sanford, Miles, Moody, Hood, &c.



# West Somerset.

## Language, Dialect, &c.

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It is pretty well known (at least by non-residents) that the patois of this neighbourhood is somewhat local and peculiar. We had hoped to have been able to present our readers with some interesting particulars on this subject, extracted from papers read before the Somersetshire Archæological Society in December, 1855, by — Baynes, Esq.; but we have been unable to procure a copy. They were not published among the Society's Proceedings.

Murray, in his Handbook of Somersetshire, makes the following remarks when speaking of the genuine natives of the "West Country":—

"In their uncouth speech are found many words and usages of the Anglo-Saxon tongue, 'a fountain-head,' says Bosworth, 'from which some streamlets flow down in every province, retaining their original purity and flavour, though not now relished, perhaps, by fastidious palates.' This patois is very remarkable in the remote district of Exmoor, as may be seen by the 'Exmoor Scolding' and 'Exmoor Courtship,' published many years ago at Exeter. Mr. Bosworth, in the introduction to his Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, enumerates the chief peculiarities of the Somersetshire dialect, and quotes as a specimen the following dedication in verse:—

"Ta you, the Dwellers o' the West,  
I'm pleas'd that thā shood be addrest;  
Vor thaw I now in Lunnun dwell,  
I mine ye still—I love ye well;  
An niver, niver shall vorget  
I vust drāw'd breath in Zummerzset;  
Amangst ye liv'd, an left ye sorry,  
As you'll know when you hire my storry

Thiase little book than take o' me;  
Tis all I hā jist now ta gee."

It is far easier for a stranger than a resident to write on this subject, as the former will be struck with peculiarities which one accustomed to would pass unnoticed. We would here observe that the origin, meaning and peculiar pronunciation of many local words, especially those of places, deserve particular attention, light being often thrown upon an obscure and half-forgotten subject by the mention of a strictly local word. The Rev. W. A. Jones, hon. secretary of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society, has directed his observation to the origin of the names of places in this neighbourhood, and has published some interesting particulars in a volume published by the above-named Society.

We also remember seeing a number of articles in one of the Taunton papers, a few years ago, on the same matter. A well-read man of letters, who has come to enjoy the beauties of West Somerset, would doubtless be able to furnish much interesting and amusing information.

Some of the local proverbs and traditions are very curious and noticeable, and if collected would form an odd and interesting work. Many of these are just passing away with the advance of education and civilisation. Some may be traced back to Roman Catholic times and customs; others are derived from Latin words when they were in more general use among the lower classes, from being accustomed to hear them in their religious services. Let us trust the day is not far off when these strange old local customs, words and proverbs, will at last find a good historian.

# West Somerset.

## Coinage.



THE money in common use in this country in former ages was not issued from one central mint, as it is now, but was the production of many moneyers located in different parts of the island. In the times of the Saxon and early English kings there were several places in Somerset in which money was coined, and in each place one or more moneyers. The British coinage in gold, silver and copper was apparently formed upon a Grecian model. The Saxon coinage appears to have been introduced gradually, and among it we find the first undoubted specimens of Somersetshire coins. We cannot discover that coins were struck in West Somerset after the Conquest at any other towns than Ilchester and Taunton. The latter town is mentioned as a place of mintage in Domesday. Specimens from the mint at Taunton of the time of Stephen are extant, but we have no evidence of its having been worked afterwards. Coins were struck at

Ilchester in the reigns of Henry II. and Henry III. In the 33rd year of Henry III. a writ was issued for the choice of officers in this mint. These appear to have been the last coins struck in this county by royal authority, it being probably found sufficient to give the privilege of coinage to the larger towns, and this part of England was supplied from the mints of Bristol and Exeter. During the troubles of the civil war it was found convenient to revive the practice, and accordingly among the pieces of necessity of that time we have some which were struck at Exeter and Bristol from 1642 to 1645, when those places held out for the king, but no such pieces are known to have issued from any town in this county.

Further particulars on the subject may be found in the second volume of the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society, from the pen of the Rev. T. F. Dymock, from which we have extracted the above. Drawings are also given of a large number of the coins struck in this county.

# West Somerset.

## Natural History.



IN a concise description of this part of our county it will not be expected that we should attempt anything like a dissertation on such an extensive subject as its Natural History. All we propose to do is, to refer our readers to such books or papers as throw light upon it.

Collinson states "that in animal and vegetable productions Somersetshire is by no means deficient, as the hills, plains, vallies, rivers and seas abound with commodities useful to mankind, and adequate to the necessary wants of man."

The late Mr. Baker, of Bridgwater, was a noteworthy local naturalist, and has published in the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society many valuable contributions. Vols. 1 and 2 contain an account of the fauna of this county, and here will be found, arranged in various classes, the birds, beasts, fish, reptiles and insects, both ordinary and extraordinary—or, in other words, the common and rare animals of this part of the county—each with its Latin as well as English name.

In the introduction of Collinson's History may be seen a long list of many rare and interesting plants, with both Latin and English title, and the neighbourhood in which each plant may be found. This was compiled previous to

the year 1796, since which time, doubtless, much might have been added to it.

Phelps' History, published in 1836, makes no allusion to this subject; but a little work, issued monthly by the head-master of Taunton College, contains much useful information, and would probably materially assist an enquirer. The publication of this work has, we are sorry to observe, been discontinued.

At the Museum of the Somersetshire Natural History Society may be seen many valuable specimens; but a very large number is yet required.

It is understood that Cecil Smith, Esq., of Bishop's Lydeard, and Dr. Prior, of Halse, have also published papers on this subject.

Miss Gifford, of Minehead, is the author of the "Marine Botanist," and in the fourth volume of the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Natural History Society she has published a paper on the Marine Flora of Somersetshire.

Mr. Crotch and other gentlemen have read many papers on our local natural history before members of the above-named Society.

Mr. Baker states that out of 344 species of birds indigenous to this country, 233 have been found in Somerset.

For further information we refer our readers to the works above mentioned.

# West Somerset.

## Societies.

### The Somersetshire Society



AS established in 1811. The objects of the Society are two-fold. First: To raise a fund, by donations and annual and life subscriptions, for the purpose of apprenticing the children of poor Somersetshire parents resident in London, and for lending (if their conduct shall have been meritorious) a certain sum of money (£20), without interest, to aid in establishing them in business. Second: To provide annually a social meeting of Somersetshire men resident in London and their friends in their native county.

The first object has been carried out, by the society having apprenticed about 200 children, and experience has shown what a blessing this help has been to many parents. To carry out the second object, there is a social meeting held every year in London, under the presidency of some nobleman or gentleman connected with the county, and the committee appeal to the men of Somersetshire to support, by their presence as well as by their subscriptions, a society which should be an annual assemblage of the sons of the county who happen to be in London, at which not only county feelings may be kept alive, and friendly intercourse between those connected with Somersetshire, wherever resident, promoted, but also funds raised for assisting those who have left the county, with a hope of benefitting themselves, and, whose expectations not having been realized, are struggling against the many diffi-

culties that surround all commencing life in the great metropolis.

### The Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.

In the spring of the year 1849 a few gentlemen of Taunton and its neighbourhood, knowing that the county of Somerset was so rich in subjects of interest to the archaeologist, naturalist, botanist and geologist, and that it deserved some better means of examination, research and description, determined to establish a society for that purpose. A committee was appointed and circulars issued to all the magistrates, clergymen and principal inhabitants of the county, inviting them to a meeting to be held in Taunton on the 26th September, 1849. So warmly was the subject taken up, that upwards of 350 gentlemen attended, and thus was established the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.

But we may be asked by some of our matter-of-fact readers to explain the uses, purposes, or intentions of this and similar societies; and we will answer their inquiries in the spirit of the report issued with the first volume of their Proceedings—"To collect and spread information upon subjects of local importance—to investigate the mineral and natural riches—to explore the accumulated treasures of this county—to gather up such portions of interesting information as would never otherwise be collected—to excite and encourage a spirit of inquiry among all classes as to the history of the past and present—to bring together in a suitable museum the various speci-

mens of Nature and Art so abundant in this neighbourhood—to form a collection of books, papers and manuscripts on natural, civil and ecclesiastical subjects, with which to form the foundation of a complete and correct history of this important county."

There are many other matters over which the society exercises a powerful influence; for where do we now hear of the wanton destruction of valuable relics, or the barbarous "restoration" of mediæval churches in Grecian or Pagan architecture! We trust these are things of the past, never again to be allowed in this our favoured land.

The society consists of about 400 members, from all parts of the country, each of whom pays an annual subscription of 10s. to defray the necessary expenses, the principal of which is the cost of publishing and illustrating the various papers read before the society, each member upon payment of his subscription being entitled to a copy.

The business is divided into two departments—archæology and natural history—with a general secretary to each. There are also a number of local secretaries, each the centre of a district, who assist the committee and general secretaries.

Although the museum and head quarters are in Taunton, the society yearly visits the various neighbouring towns, and a temporary local museum is formed during its stay. Papers of interest are also read at the conversazioni meetings held at Taunton during the winter months, the expenses being defrayed by those who attend them.

Publications are exchanged and a correspondence carried on with no less than seventeen British and five foreign scientific and archæological societies, and amongst the corresponding members and contributors of articles of interest will be found the names of men well known to the literary and scientific world. We would mention those of Buckland, Baker, Button, Cockerell, Crotch, Cross, Carter, Daubeny, Ellis, Falconer, Ferry, Forbes, Freeman, Giles, Godwin, Hardwick, Hugo, Jones, Lloyd, Phillips, Parker, Quekett, Scarth, Sanford, Sedgwick, Stradling, Trevelyan, Wilson, Walters, Warre, Moore, Green, and Dawkins. There are many others whom our memory will not allow us to record.

The society also subscribes to various scientific works, and makes an exchange of duplicates with the British Museum, with the Museum of Practical Geology, and private collectors.

It also undertakes, as far as its limited means will allow, the investigation of the various camps, barrows, and other antiquities of the district. There are a great

number of most interesting relics and places in the West of England that would repay minute examination. Among other places which already have received investigation are the celebrated camp on Worle Hill, near Weston-super-Mare, the Banwell Caves, Holwell Cavern, Wells Cathedral and Palace, and a large number of churches, abbeys, castles, monasteries, priories, camps, &c., full particulars of which are given in the society's Proceedings for the past fifteen years. The annual meetings are itinerary, and are held in the various towns of note or of antiquarian importance in the county. Excursions are made from head quarters to all places of interest in the neighbourhood, and lectures given, or papers read, on the spot by gentlemen of the party. Most pleasant, profitable and interesting tours they are, as they often close with an animated discussion.

The society has a fine collection of specimens, in the Museum at Taunton, of the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, together with a large number of curiosities from all parts of the world. A descriptive catalogue is much required, and this will probably be prepared when the collection is more complete. Among such a vast number it is of course impossible to give anything like a full list, but we would especially notice the following:—A collection of stuffed animals and birds, both local and from distant parts; Roman, British, and mediæval antiquities, discovered in Taunton, at the Cemetery, old houses in East-street, St. James's churchyard, Risdon-house, &c., &c.; portions of a gigantic Irish elk, found at the Gas-works; portions of rhinoceros and trunks of oak, dug up at the Gaol; a quantity of British pottery, found at Norton Fitzwarren; copy of Magna Charta; Doomsday Book (part); John of France's sword; Roman pavements, from East Coker, High Ham, Pitney, Langport, and other places; Indian and other gods; a variety of Egyptian and other ancient antiquities; a vast assortment of minerals, coins, seals, arms, carvings, books, papers, parchments, &c., &c.; a beautifully-carved Gothic reredos, dug up at Wellington Church; a large assortment of dry plants, ferns, shells, and botanical, geological and mineral specimens; a collection of oriental birds, presented by the Hon. Mr. Blundell; a quantity of ancient British implements and other antiquities from Worle Camp, Weston; a number of heads and horns of Indian animals, by the late Capt. Speke; numerous casts of the beautiful sculptures which adorn the West front of Wells Cathedral (procured at a cost of above £50); "The Pigott Drawings" of churches, ruins, monuments, &c., in the West of England, valued at £2,000, presented to the county and ordered to be deposited here. But the gem of the Museum is doubt-

less the William's and Beard's geological collections, consisting chiefly of bones, fossils, and relics of antediluvian and extinct animals, principally from the caves at Banwell and the Mendip Hills. They were purchased by special subscription, at a cost of £200, and are considered the finest collection in the world. Professor Owen was deputed to procure them at double the original cost for the British Museum. There are great numbers of other antiquities, specimens and curiosities that deserve especial notice, which we are unable to particularise; but we trust that a complete catalogue will soon be published, which would greatly add to the interest of the collection, and enable the public to understand and appreciate it.

In conclusion we would remind our readers that a far larger number of persons of this district ought to become subscribers, which would increase the funds of the society and enable the committee to undertake examinations that its limited means now exclude it from doing. They would also be able, by purchase, to add to their excellent Museum and provide more room and cases, which are much required, for this is without doubt the place where should be found all the various treasures of Nature and Art that are spread throughout the county, where they are under the care of the curator and the inspection of large numbers of gentlemen who value and appreciate them.

It is not, perhaps, generally known that the Museum is open free of expense at all times to members or their friends, and that there need not be the slightest difficulty to any party to get admission. We would suggest that visitors previous to going should look up any old coins, seals, parchments, relics, or other curiosities or antiquities

they may have lying about, and take the opportunity of depositing them with the curator. We may add that a visit will well repay the time given.

When it is known that the largest proportion of subscribers are from Bath and the Eastern end of the county, and that they are anxious to remove the Museum to that city, we trust it will promote a spirit of emulation and enterprise to promote the interests of the society, and to retain and improve the finest collection of works of Nature and Art in the West.

### The Somerset Chamber of Agriculture.

On the 22nd of May, in the year 1867, a meeting was held at Yeovil, at which the above society was established, in connection with the Central Chamber in London.

The object of these associations is to see that the agricultural and similar interests are properly represented in the House of Commons, and also to prevent undue and unequal taxation.

They propose, by uniting parish to parish, union to union, and county to county, with the Central Board in London, to form an organisation of great power and interest.

The Somersetshire Chamber of Agriculture has seventeen local sub-divisions, corresponding with the seventeen Poor-law Unions, into which the county is divided; and although but lately established, it promises to be of great service to agriculturists and other inhabitants of the county.

# West Somerset.

## Canals.



AT the present time canals are not much in demand, although not a generation has yet passed since they were held in the very highest estimation, and canal shares and canal engineering were as much the order of the day thirty years ago as railways are at the present time.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the era of canal and river navigation was a very important step towards the introduction of a system of internal communication in this kingdom for heavy and extended traffic.

The first canal cut in this country was opened in the year 1755, and from that time to the year 1830 the work of laying out and constructing canals and making rivers navigable proceeded with almost ceaseless activity.

In 1796 an Act of Parliament was passed for cutting a canal from the port of Topsham, on the river Exe (seven miles below Exeter), to proceed in an easterly direction, with branches to Collumpton and Tiverton, passing Wellington, and ending in the river Tone, at Taunton Bridge. The Act (now before us) gave extensive powers to collect water and to construct four reservoirs and other heavy works; but as few of the shares were taken up, only a portion of this canal was executed at the time. Its proposed length was 35 miles. The tolls were 1d., 2d. and 3d. per ton per mile. The next scheme was a proposal to construct a canal from Taunton Bridge, to pass near Bridgwater, and so on eastwardly until it reached the mouth of the Avon, about seven miles this side of Bristol; but although many maps of Somerset show this

canal as in existence, it was never fully carried out. The total length would have been 41 miles, and its construction would doubtless have added to the prosperity of the West of England. It was opposed by the corporation of Bridgwater. About the year 1824, however, the great need of a better water communication to the town of Taunton having been felt, a company was formed to construct the Bridgwater and Taunton canal. It is true that the river Tone had for many years been "the silent highway;" but the great inconveniences of drought in summer, and floods and ice in winter, were serious objections, and the loss of time and often the injury caused to goods was a most considerable drawback. About one-half a mile of the Tone (from the town to Firepool lock) was proposed to be used, and all the other part (13½ miles) was soon afterwards cut. As there is not above 20 feet difference in the level of Taunton and Bridgwater, there were not many engineering difficulties, and few locks were needed. Great opposition was offered by the conservators of the Tone, who afterwards compelled the canal company to pay heavy compensation. Parliament, however, passed the bill. After the completion of this canal the two navigations were worked in opposition, and the tolls were much reduced on both lines. This being ruinous to the canal shareholders, they applied to Parliament for assistance, and showed that they could not exist in opposition to the Tone conservators, and therefore prayed that, as the canal was undoubtedly the best water communication, they should have power to purchase the interest of the Tone navigation, and so take the whole trade into their own hands. The compensation paid was handed over for the benefit of the Taunton and



Somerset Hospital. The amount of trade done for some years previous to the construction of the railway was considerable—coal, culm, iron, slate, brickyard goods, foreign timber and general merchandise being brought up, and hay, corn, malt liquors, English timber and agricultural produce being the chief articles taken back. The canal receives its principal supply of water from the Tone at Firepool lock (the highest end), also from a few feeders lower down. A powerful 40-horse pumping-engine was erected below Ham to supply a further quantity from the Tone after the water had turned all the mills at Bathpool, Creech, Ham, &c., but is only used in case of a short supply of water or of drought. There were formerly mills at Obridge and Firepool, but they were removed many years ago, as they interfered with the navigation of the river.

Docks were constructed at Bridgwater at the junction of the canal with the Parrett. The time of transit from town to town generally occupies about six hours.

The amount of tolls at the most flourishing time, we believe, amounted to upwards of £7,000 per year. The canal was mortgaged for the sum of £33,000. A trade in lime and limestone was anticipated, and expensive kilns were built at Firepool, but we understand were never used. The general width is about 25 feet, with wider parts at certain places to allow boats to load, &c., the locks being about 15 feet wide. The ordinary canal boats carry about 7 tons, but the large lock-up barges upwards of 25 tons. At one time the toll on coals was 3s. per ton, but it is now much reduced. This canal was opened in 1827.

Some years after the construction of the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal a branch was projected from Creech to run to Curry Mallet and Beer Crowcombe, through Horton, on to Chard and Ilminster. As the traffic on this line was far less than on the main, it was constructed of less width, in some parts being only 12 feet. The country through which it passes has many hills, that are pierced with small tunnels, the boats being propelled by men, while the horse and rider crosses the summits of the hills above. There are several of these tunnels near Hatch Beauchamp. Large quantities of alabaster were excavated in the progress of the work. The locks are also more numerous, and near Thorne Falcon is an "incline," which is a contrivance by which the boats pass singly into a larger boat or case, which, running upon a line of railway, conveys them either to a higher or lower level, as desired. The act was obtained A.D. 1834.

An attempt was made a few years ago to obtain power to form this canal into a railway; but it was afterwards

found easier to construct a new line, rather than adapt that of the canal.

About fifty years ago a canal was cut from West Leigh to Tiverton. The Grand Western Canal was intended to connect the borough of Taunton and the Bridgwater Canal with the county of Devon and its towns. In a great measure this canal follows the course of that mentioned as designed in the year 1796, but does not extend beyond Tiverton. It leaves the Tone at French Weir, and proceeds in a westerly direction, and, rising by means of "lifts and locks," joins the branch that connects the Bridgwater Canal at Firepool. At Norton, Bradford, Nynhead, &c., are lofty "lifts," fitted up with all the needful machinery, and at Wellsford, near Wellington, is an "incline," to enable the canal to pass those hills that enclose the Vale of Taunton Deane. Some years ago an Act of Parliament was passed "to alter and increase the rates of tonnage authorised to be taken by the company of proprietors of the Grand Western Canal, and to amend several acts for making the said canals." The tolls were to be increased from 1d., 2d. and 3d., to 3d., 4d. and 6d. per ton per mile, according to the class of goods.

As the railway from Taunton to Tiverton runs almost parallel with the canal, the first ten miles next the town of Taunton is now rendered almost useless. Within the past few months this canal has been purchased by the Bristol and Exeter Railway Company for £30,000; they are selling the land to the neighbouring owners, and ere long the western end will be totally destroyed.

In 1825 numerous meetings were called at Taunton, and generally throughout West Somerset and East Devon, for the purpose of constructing a Grand Ship Canal, from a point called Stolford, on the Bristol Channel, towards Bridgwater, on to Creech (with a branch to Taunton), thence following somewhat the direction of the present Chard Canal, and ending at the town of Beer, on the English Channel. The celebrated Telford was appointed engineer, and most sanguine expectations were held as to the marvellous results to be accomplished. It was foretold that Taunton would become a "second Liverpool," and the account given of the speeches of the great men of the day at that time in Taunton are most amusing.

The old town, however, although she has not yet attained those great honours anticipated and hoped for by these sanguine fathers, yet maintains her own; and long may she continue to do so, especially now that, instead of the "slow and sure" method of canal traffic, she is provided with the more certain and expeditious system of railway communication!

# West Somerset.

## Railways.

**A**MONG the numerous aids to the advancement of society and the progress of a nation, probably none offer greater assistance than fast and easy means of transit from one part of a country to another, and speedy communication between the various nations of the earth. The greater advance made by any nation in civilisation, the more numerous the roads become. At first a few main roads from one city to another will be constructed. Experience would soon teach travellers to select the best and easiest route for such a road; and it is observable that the British, Roman, mediæval and modern roads, together with the canals and railways, in a great measure run through the same line of country, often crossing and intersecting each other.

The inhabitants of West Somerset have not been backward in adopting the various improvements in travelling as they have been introduced, and it may somewhat surprise our readers to learn that four years before the completion of the first railway, in general use in this country, public meetings were held in Taunton, and great exertions made to form a company for the construction of a railway to connect that town with Bristol and Exeter. The meeting referred to was held 23rd January, 1825, at the Market-house, Taunton, Malachi Blake, Esq., in the chair, when a society was formed, under the title of "The Taunton Grand Western Railroad Company." The sum of £200,000 was proposed to be raised. In the prospectus the advantages of railway communication were fully set out, and the proposed rate of travelling was modestly stated to be

twelve miles an hour for passenger trains, and eight miles per hour for goods trains. The cost of formation and maintenance was stated to be far less than the then existing means of conveyance, and the expense of carriage, it was expected, would therefore be reduced one-half.

This appears to us to have been a somewhat plucky proposal of the Taunton men of that day, who would have been astonished could they have foreseen the balance-sheet of the Bristol and Exeter Railway of the year 1868, where it is shown that their annual income is nearly double that of the proposed capital of our bold Tauntonians.

In 1829 the railroad from Liverpool to Manchester was opened, after unheard-of difficulties and expense. Stephenson adopted the narrow gauge, similar to what had been in use on the colliery tramways, and which is now generally used in the North; but when Brunel commenced constructing railways in the South and West of England he introduced the seven-feet, or broad gauge.

Soon after this time the Great Western Railway was proposed from London to Bristol, and Brunel was appointed the engineer.

In 1836 the Bristol and Exeter Railway Company obtained their charter, with power to connect the above-mentioned cities by railway, which it was proposed to pass through Taunton; and it was in the year 1840 that the Vale of Taunton Deane first resounded with the shrill note of the railway whistle. But Taunton was not long permitted to remain a terminus; for soon after it was extended to "White Ball"—a place near the Blackdown hills, about three miles to the west of Wellington, where a temporary station was erected until the tunnel through

the adjoining hill was completed; and to this point ran the various coaches from Devon and Cornwall.

As the country through which the line passed in this neighbourhood was generally level, there were no particular matters of interest to record respecting its construction, if we exempt the White Ball tunnel before-mentioned and the difficulty in passing through Bathpool and Creech. On account of the low level, inverted arches were necessary to keep out the floods and other waters. For many years after completion the Great Western Company rented and worked the Bristol and Exeter Railway. Soon after the line was extended to Exeter the inhabitants of the "Far West" promoted the South Devon Railway, to obtain the benefit of a quick communication to Plymouth. This line was under the management of the celebrated Brunel the younger, who constructed it for working on the atmospheric principle, with stationary engines instead of locomotives; but the plan, after a great outlay, was abandoned. The scenery on this line is very romantic and beautiful, and will well repay a visit.

The advantages of railway communication being now so apparent, in 1850 the residents of central Somerset, feeling the effect of isolation, proposed a line to branch from Durston (a spot about half-way between Taunton and Bridgwater) to Yeovil, &c., to meet the South-Western Railway. This line runs principally through the moor country, and is worked by the Bristol and Exeter Company. Most of the trains run from Taunton, and follow the Bristol and Exeter line to Durston, where they branch off. The names of the stations are Durston, Athelney, Langport, Martock and Yeovil.

The Somerset and Dorset Railway starts from the sea pier at Burnham, at the mouth of the rivers Tone and Parrett, and runs to Poole, a port on the South coast, thus connecting the Bristol with the English Channel. The principal stations are as follows:—Highbridge, Glastonbury, Wells, Blandford and Poole. The Somerset Central line was formerly worked by the Bristol and Exeter Company, but now by the proprietors.

In 1862 a new railway from Taunton to Watchet, a port on the North coast of Somerset, was opened. This line passes through a beautifully hilly and woody country, and consists mostly of a series of small cuttings and embankments. The scenery is very fine, especially about Coombe Florey, or the "Flowery Vale," the seat of the late celebrated Sydney Smith. This railway is leased to the Bristol and Exeter Company. As it was found necessary to issue a large number of preference shares, bearing 5 per cent. interest, to enable the directors to complete

the line, the original promoters expect to get little or no interest for their capital. The stations are as follows:—Bishop's Lydeard, Crowcombe Heathfield, Stogumber, Williton and Watchet. The trains leave the Bristol and Exeter line at Norton Fitzwarren, about three miles West of Taunton.

Great expectations were formed of the business proposed to be done in the coal trade; but we have not yet seen much result. It is not the interest of the Bristol and Exeter Company to fully develop the traffic on this line, as they only get a share of the profit; but by encouraging traders to import their Welsh coal at Dunball, near Bridgwater, they get the whole of the cost of carriage to Taunton.

There is a short line constructed from Watchet to the iron mines in that neighbourhood, and called the Brendon-hill Railway, or the West Somerset Mineral Line. It was originally opened for mineral traffic only, but, having lately been inspected by a Government officer, now carries passengers and general merchandise. The stations are Washford, Roadwater and Coombe Row. At the higher end is the "incline," where the railway is laid with a steep gradient, and rises in all about 800 feet. The iron ore is conveyed by this line to Watchet, where it is shipped to Wales, coal being brought back in exchange.

The next line we would notice is called the Chard and Taunton Railway. It branches from the Bristol and Exeter line between Bathpool and Creech, and runs off in a South-Eastern direction to Chard, where a three-mile branch joins the South-Western Railway. The stations, after leaving Taunton, are Hatch Beauchamp, Ilminster and Chard. Some heavy earthworks were necessary, particularly between Taunton and Hatch, as the line passes over the range of lias hills at Thorn. At Hatch Beauchamp is a deep cutting and tunnel, to avoid the steep hill on which this village is situated. This railway was constructed by the Bristol and Exeter Company.

The last line we have to notice is but just commenced, and is called the North Devon Railway, or the Barnstaple line. It branches from the Bristol and Exeter line near the junction of the West Somerset Railway, at Norton Fitzwarren, and runs in a Westerly direction towards Milverton, Wiveliscombe, Dulverton and Barnstaple, and there joins the branch that runs from Exeter. The Bristol and Exeter Company have materially assisted the formation and progress of the line, and there can be no doubt that when completed it will add a considerable amount of trade to that company, and at the same time open up a large district of rich land and a good neighbourhood. No progress has been made lately.

There are several small branches connected with the railways already mentioned, namely, Tiverton, Bridgwater, Burnham, Weston-super-Mare, &c., of which no particular notice is required.

It will be doubtless observed that the Bristol and Exeter Railway Company have the chief direction and management of the railways connected with this neighbourhood; and as it may be interesting to some of our readers, we add a few further particulars respecting the details of this rising company.

When the Bristol and Exeter Company commenced working their own line, they purchased several very splendid engines—some with eight wheels, suitable for ordinary trains, some with nine-feet driving-wheels for express trains, and some with side cranks and axles for luggage trains. These engines are of the very best work-

manship and design, and attracted much attention at the time. They are not called by name, but numbered; and are understood to have cost from £2,000 to £3,000 each, and some to be equal to a thousand-horse power. We find that the company, in 1864, possessed 64 engines, 219 passenger carriages, 1,000 goods trucks, 35 ballast trucks, and 20 coke waggons—in all, 1,274 carriages of various descriptions. These are made, altered and repaired at the company's railway carriage works at Bridgwater. The cost of a first-class carriage is often above £400, while a second-class costs more than half that sum.

The total number of miles of railway is 121½. The yearly income is somewhere about £360,000, or about £2,700 per mile. These figures seem to denote rather an extensive business; and yet, in comparison with some other companies, it is but a small concern.



# West Somerset.

## Public Buildings.

### The Shire Hall.



IN most counties there is one city or large place which is indisputably the county town, or the city in which the principal business of the shire is carried on; but Somerset is an exception to the general rule, for Somerton, Ilchester, Taunton, Bristol, Bath and Wells have severally claimed the honour. There are many reasons which will account for this peculiarity. The great extent of the county—the rise and decline of towns—the fact that the cities of Bristol and Bath are at the extreme Eastern end—and Wells, although central, and possessing a cathedral, yet its small size does not entitle it to rank as the county town. The length of Somerset from East to West is upwards of seventy miles, and it is about thirty miles from North to South. It has been usual for many years past to appoint two chief towns—the business for the Eastern Division being transacted at Wells, and that for the Western Division at Taunton. The assizes and sessions are divided between those places, the county gaol being at Taunton, and a House of Correction at Shepton Mallet.

In the year 1854 an estate in Taunton (late the property of the Pearson family), consisting of about four or five acres, was purchased by the county, and the present buildings erected thereon. The architect was G. Moffat, Esq., of London, and the contract was taken by Mr. George Pollard, of Taunton, for about £17,000, the cost of the whole range of buildings, including heating, ventilation, furniture, extras and alterations, amounting to upwards of £25,000. The exterior is built of Babbicombe grey marble, brought from the neighbourhood of Torquay, the

interior being faced with brick. In addition to the two courts, robing, retiring, waiting, witnesses' and other rooms, the building contains the judges' apartments, on the Western side, and rooms for a person to reside who has charge of the place. The entrance-hall, lobby and main staircase demand our admiration; they are being adorned with marble busts of the "Worthies of Somerset"—those of Locke, Ken, Young, Speke, Byam and Blake having been already placed there. The Crown Court, on the Eastern side, is a fine, lofty apartment, lighted from the North and East, with a Gothic panelled deal ceiling. There is a subterranean communication from this court to the gaol on the opposite side of the street, in which prisoners are conveyed for trial. The Nisi Prius Court, on the Western side of the building, is similar to that on the other side, except the windows and gaol communication. The Grand Jury-room is over the main entrance, and contains a handsome bay window, with a raised dais. Above the central staircase a lofty dome-light cupola and tower rises to upwards of 80 feet in height, and is a conspicuous object in all parts of the neighbourhood; it is also used for ventilating purposes. Between the courts there is a private communication for the use of the judges, and a retiring-room for consultation. The magistrates took considerable trouble to obtain good plans for the new buildings, in the hope of producing model courts; but although they have secured many conveniences and some excellent arrangements, yet it is said that there is much room for improvement, as a difficulty is often experienced by the various officers of the court in hearing the witnesses; but until the laws of acoustics are more fully

understood, all new buildings will be liable to this objection.

The following business is transacted at the new Shire Hall:—The Assizes, the Sessions, the County and Police Courts, the Revising Barrister's Court; and here also the county elections are conducted.

### Somerset County Gaol.

There was formerly a small, inconvenient "bridewell," or gaol, in Taunton, belonging to the county of Somerset, but the principal place of confinement was at Ilchester. In the year 1754 the "bridewell," having been declared insecure, was sold, and a new site purchased for £300, in the parish of Wilton. Here the county erected a new gaol at a considerable expense, and this building formed the nucleus of the present extensive establishment. It was for the reception of persons guilty of felonies, misdemeanours, or a breach of the peace—but not for debtors—and was considerably enlarged and improved in the year 1815. It was formerly called Wilton Gaol, but to prevent errors, is now known as Taunton Gaol. On the 24th of February, 1843, after very extensive additions and alterations, it was made "The County Gaol," and debtors were confined in it, but in a separate department. Although the gaol at Ilchester was destroyed very many years ago, there is another at Shepton Mallet, for the use of the Eastern part of the county. Considerable discussion has taken place lately as to the advisability of giving up the Shepton Mallet, Gaol, and making Taunton the only gaol for the county. Great expense would be saved in the matter of salaries, but considerable cost would be incurred in extra travelling. The present gaol covers about four acres of land, and contains cells for 275 prisoners on the separate system. It is fitted up with every convenience, and is a model of order, cleanliness and system. It is divided into several departments for male and female inmates—debtors, invalids, convicts, &c., and contains numerous airing-yards, a chapel (on the Eastern side), hospital, refractory cells, treadmill, workshops, store-rooms, school, governor's house, &c., &c. Various trades are carried on, under the superintendence of competent instructors, mat-making being the principal one. The chief officers are the governor, with his staff of guards and turnkeys; chaplain and surgeon; the matron, with her assistants; and the various tradesmen, engineers, cooks, &c.

The cells are built on both sides of a corridor, and are each about ten feet long by six feet wide, and provided with a set of rules, a Bible, bed, wash-basin, &c. There is an arrangement that each prisoner can call the guard

immediately; a small sight-hole is in every door, so that the guard can at any time look in. On the arrival of a prisoner by a magistrate's order, he is taken into a room, where the charge, with name, residence, &c., is fully entered; he is then stripped and washed; the barber eases him of any superfluous hair, and he is dressed in one of the particular county uniforms, according to the nature of his offence. Executions (which happily seldom occur) take place over the principal entrance on a flat part of the roof. The prisoners were formerly buried at Wilton churchyard, but now those who suffer capital punishment are interred in an allotted portion of one of the yards.

The site of the gaol appears to have been on the bed of the mountain stream from the Black Down Hills, which runs adjoining, and was probably formerly far larger, and during heavy rains became a regular torrent, as we find that, on digging for foundations some years ago, whole trunks of trees were dug up, apparently having been washed down by a flood; and, still more remarkable, large bones, &c., were found, considered those of a rhinoceros.

In consequence of there being more cells than prisoners, the magistrates have lately made arrangements for the reception of prisoners from London and elsewhere, who are sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. They are generally a rough set, and give the officers much trouble.

The gaol is governed by a committee of magistrates appointed at the sessions, who are called "The Visiting Justices," and who examine all complaints, punish refractory prisoners, and see that proper rules, &c., are observed. Until lately the diet of prisoners was more generous than of many who have to work hard for a honest living, but much attention is now paid to the subject, and probably few will again do what has often been done before—endeavour to get sent to gaol for the sake of better food. According to the present system, there is a sliding scale, which varies according to the conduct and length of service of each prisoner. There are various kinds of punishments—the mill, the crank, deprivation of portion of food, confinement in dark cells, &c. This gaol is also a house of correction, and there are therefore separate salaries and duties, &c. The salaries of the principal officers are about as follows:—Governor, £400 per year; chaplain, £230; surgeon, £100; matron, £40; chief turnkey, £85; assistant, £60; guards, £45.

The County Gaol is built of stone, in a very massive and substantial manner, under the direction of the late county surveyors.

The Spring and Winter assizes are held at Taunton,

Summer at Wells, and Spring and Summer at Bristol. The quarter sessions, spring and Michaelmas, at Wells, Midsummer and Epiphany at Taunton.

The following particulars are extracts from the report presented at Quarter Sessions, 1867:—

Taunton has a good prison; would require but little additional expense in fitting it up for 280 prisoners; has ample accommodation in the town for magistrates, jurors and witnesses; has excellent new courts, but lately built, at an expense to the county of about £30,000; and is situated upon a main line of railway; but it is placed, for general convenience, too much at the extremity of the county.

The sheriff in this county pays £50 for the Winter, and £63 for the Spring assize for the judges' lodgings at Taunton.

The expenditure at the Taunton gaol in 1866 was £6,212 13s. 10d., for 135 prisoners, or about £46 a-head. There was repaid to the county for prosecutions and Middlesex prisoners £2,097 9s. 4d., leaving £4,115 as the cost to the county.

At present Taunton gaol contains 203 separate cells, 7 punishment cells, 40 hospital accommodation, 25 debtors' wards—total, 275.

(Shepton Mallet gaol contains 205 separate cells, 5 punishment cells, 26 hospital accommodation, 9 debtors' wards—total, 245.)

The cost of each prisoner (for 1866) per head at Taunton was £26 18s. 2½d.; at Shepton, £22 6s. 9½d.—a difference of £4 11s. 6d. against Taunton.

The officers' salaries and fees amount at Taunton to £2,191 19s. 9d., at Shepton to £1,646 19s., or £545 0s. 9d. more at Taunton than Shepton.

The difference in the cost of each prisoner per head at Taunton is in a measure due to the excess of the salaries at Taunton over Shepton, the total joint expenses of salaries to officers in Somerset being £3,838 18s. 9d.

The daily number of prisoners, including debtors, has been—at Taunton 94, at Shepton 110.

### The County Lunatic Asylum

was erected at Wells in 1848, for paupers. It is an extensive building, 1½ miles from the city, on the Bath road. There are about 500 patients, 40 attendants and servants, and upwards of 80 acres of land. Considerable enlargements were made in 1856, and a handsome new chapel is now in course of erection. Every attention is paid to the health and comfort of the inmates—music, concerts, balls, &c., being occasionally given. The buildings are supplied with Turkish and other baths, and

many conveniences have lately been added. The management is vested in the hands of a committee of visiting magistrates.

### The Barracks.

In the year 1796 the Government erected on a high spot on the South side of Taunton buildings for a troop of cavalry and apartments for the officers. For many years past, at stated intervals, these barracks have been occupied by detachments from various regiments; but since the spread of the railway system, and consequently the ease with which large bodies of men are transferred from one part to another, it has been found advisable to keep the regiments in large or military towns. It is from this cause that of late years little use has been made of these buildings. Accommodation was provided for 4 officers, and 60 men and horses.

The barracks have been used as head quarters and exercise grounds (for the district) for the Pensioners since they have been enrolled; and these veterans may yet often be seen marching and counter-marching as of old, or, when their duties are over, sitting around telling their old stories and "fighting their battles o'er again."

It is now the head-quarters and drilling-ground of the 1st Somerset Militia. Here at stated times England's bold peasantry learn "the noble art of war," under the instruction of "the staff," who often meet, and are themselves exercised in the science of instructing others.

The sergeant-major and some other officers have here permanent quarters, and take charge of the arms and accoutrements, which are deposited in large rooms lately fitted up.

Much of the drilling is done in the large open yard attached; but the marching and the field-day exercises take place in the neighbourhood.

The Taunton Rifle Corps also often meet and are exercised at the barracks.

We understand that the Government still retain the right of the buildings and premises, although granted to the county of Somerset for the use of the militia, &c.

The approaches to the barracks are narrow, but the site is healthy and airy. The buildings extend on the North and East sides, facing a South and dry aspect. They comprise—guard-house, magazine, workshops, residences, large dormitories, store rooms, engine-house, hospital, hay and corn stores, granary, &c.

The regiment is an old one, and is composed of colonel, lieutenant-colonel, 2 majors, 10 captains, 8 lieutenants, adjutant, quartermaster, surgeon, &c., the non-commissioned officers, and from 900 to 1,000 privates.



# West Somerset.

## General County Matters.

### The Lord-Lieutenant.



duties.

HIS office is of ancient date. The word is from the French, and means a "place holder," being a deputy or representative of the Crown. The Lord-Lieutenant has power to call out the militia in case of invasion or rebellion, and similar important

### The High Sheriff.

In Phelps' "Modern Somersetshire" may be seen a list of the Lords-Lieutenant and High Sheriffs of this county, the latter from the year 1154 to A.D. 1835; and we are there informed that "Shire-reeves or Sheriffs are officers of great antiquity. They were expressed in Latin by the names of *Vice-Comites*, or *Vice-Domini* (Vice-King), independent of, and not subject to, the Earl. The Sheriffs of counties had the government and custody of them. They were men of high rank and great power in the realm, having one or more counties committed to them by the King at his pleasure, either in custody, or at a *ferme rent* certain. To them the King usually committed, with the counties, his castles and manors lying within their bailiwick. They provided the castles with ammunition and other necessities; they also stocked and improved his manors; in short, the Sheriff was the King's farmer or bailiff, and the collector of all his rents and revenues within his district.

"They were formerly chosen by the inhabitants of the several counties; and by statute of 28 Edward I. (1300), it was provided that the people should have the election of Sheriffs where the shrievalty is not of inheritance.

"By a statute of 9 Edward II. (1316) it was enacted that

the Sheriffs should from thenceforth be assigned by the Lord Chancellor, Treasurer, the Chief Justices and the Chief Baron, who meet in the Exchequer Chamber on the morrow of All Souls yearly, which day is now altered to the morrow of St. Martin, by the last Act for abridging Michaelmas Term. Three persons are proposed, to be reported, if approved, to the King, who afterwards appoints one of them to be Sheriff. By many old statutes the office of Sheriff is made annual, but the form of the writ is during the King's pleasure.

"The Sheriff is the keeper of the King's peace, both by common law and special commission; he is the first man in the county, and superior in rank to any nobleman therein during his office; he has under him an Under-Sheriff, Bailiffs and Gaolers."

### Miscellaneous.

The following particulars respecting the officers, buildings, and other matters connected with this county, are extracted from the report presented at the Quarter Sessions held at Taunton in the year 1867, which has been already referred to:—

The Clerk of the Peace receives £1,800 per annum.

The Surveyor a salary of £360 per year for all work done by him for the county, which includes travelling expenses.

The Treasurer is paid by a salary of £300 per annum.

### County Rate.

A rate of one farthing in the pound under the old county rate produced £2,029; under the new it produces £2,296.

The actual sum raised in 1866 for general purposes was £12,174 1s. 8d., being three-halfpence in the pound. The



average expenditure for nearly 24 years previous to the present year was about £11,400 for the ordinary expenses of the county, exclusive of police. To this must be added an average yearly expenditure of £3,389 on permanent works; but for this sum the county possesses the two prisons, the two court-houses, the justice-rooms at the police-stations, and the militia barracks and storehouses at Bath. It is evident that these heavy expenses will not again occur.

### Weights and Measures.

The duties of inspectors have latterly been performed by the county police.

### The Somersetshire Police.

The report of the Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ending the 29th September, 1867, made to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, states that the county has an area of 1,051,498 acres, of which 3,676 are allotted to each constable. The force is composed of 234 married, 2 widowers, and 50 single men. The Chief Constable's salary is £500 a-year, and £200 allowed for horse and travelling expenses. His deputy receives £200 a-year. There are 3 first-class superintendents, 1 second-class, 4 third-class, and 7 fourth-class, and they are paid £152, £140, £122, and £110 a-year each respectively. There are 4 first-class sergeants, and 20 second-class; 40 first-class constables, 56 second-class, 5 third-class, and 144

fourth class, who receive salaries ranging from 27s. 2d. to 19s. a-week. The station-houses are all in admirable order, the police well clothed and equipped, and the duties satisfactorily arranged and provided for. The force is considered to be in an efficient state.

### Parliamentary Returns.--County of Somerset, 1867.

Number of parishes, townships or places, 495.

Population (1861), 463,368.

Gross estimated rental, according to the valuation lists in force in 1865, being the last returns now in the office of the Poor Law Board, £2,849,997.

Rate per £ to the relief of the poor on gross estimated rental, for the year ended Lady-day, 1864, i.e., before the Union Chargeability Act came into operation, 1s. 2d.

Number of persons per acre, 43.

Amount of gross estimated rental per person, £6 3s.

Number of schools receiving annual grants, 195.

Number of schools not receiving annual grants, 89.

Average number in attendance in schools receiving annual grants—day, 18,980; night, 1,010; in schools not receiving annual grants—day, 4,031; night, 248—total, 24,269.

Per centage on population of total number of children for whom accommodation is provided, 7·87; per centage on population of average number in attendance, 5·24.

# The Dialect of West Somerset.

(SUPPLEMENT TO PAGE 98.)



WE have already alluded to a paper read before the members of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society by F. S. Baynes, Esq., in the year 1855. We have been favoured by the Rev. R. S. Short with a copy, from which we make the following extracts, published in the *Somerset County Gazette* of December 29, 1855:—

Mr. T. S. Baynes said he had to bring before the meeting a few remarks on some of the peculiarities of the Somersetshire dialect; and he was glad to have an opportunity of doing so, not only on account of the great interest and importance of the subject itself, but because it was one which it was pre-eminently suitable that a society like that should investigate. He therefore hoped that many members of the society, who were so well able to do so, might be induced to take the matter up, and assist in its elucidation. Certainly few subjects more interesting or important could be proposed to the Archaeological Society of a county than its dialect. For if Archaeology be, as he presumed it was, the science of unwritten history, having for its main object the interpretation of the past—and that not so much through doubtful and often legendary documents, but rather by means of material records—having for its object in that way the interpretation of the past—it must necessarily find in language some of the richest materials for its purpose. (Cheers). This was now pretty generally understood, and philology was beginning to assume its true position as the indispensable handmaid of history. We willingly spent time, and money too, in visiting the ruined architecture of a religious house, even though it might not date beyond the Decorated or Early English period; if there were genuine Norman remains, our curiosity was increased in proportion; and if a genuine Saxon ruin existed in the county, he (Mr. Baynes) believed every member of

the society would wish to see it, and find out all he could about its history. There was thus little want of zeal in this direction. In respect to the more interesting remains of ecclesiastical architecture, indeed, we were not content with a mere visit. We took their measurements, described them accurately, and sketched or photographed the ruined door-way, before Time had destroyed the lizard's tail, the lion's head, or griffin's claws, still visible in rude but graphic sculpture on the mouldering stone; but the rustic in the adjoining field who stops his plough in mid-furrow, and, gazing on the antiquarian and artist at their work, says to his fellow, "Thic'ool make a purty pictur' drafted out—thic'ool;" or looking over your shoulder, expresses his wonder and admiration after his own fashion, "Daizy me! that beats all; if that beant the vurry pleace issul—look at the zun an' zsheeade dro' the door-waye, and the kexes and pixy-stools in the grass, and the evet on the white stane; I zim I zeas un hirn"—of him we take no account; but in many respects he was really a far more curious archaeological specimen than the ruin at his side. If we could only photograph that man's mind, his way of thinking and feeling, his notion of things, his accent, pronunciation and vocabulary, we should get at some very strange facts, and possess ourselves of rich archaeological materials; for, rude and ignorant clown as they knew him to be, he was nevertheless an authentic document of elder times—a living epistle from our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, a volume of ancient history, bound, sometimes, perhaps, in cloth, more commonly in leather, most commonly of all in duck and corduroy—(laughter)—one, however, that it was important they should read without delay. It was thus urgent because it was clear that we should not be able to keep the volume long. He was anxious that every sentence, if possible every syllable, of that living epistle should be deciphered at once, because they could not help seeing that they would

soon lose it altogether. The whole tendency of modern life, of modern improvements and modern progress, was to obliterate these archaic remains of other men and older manners—these picturesque provincial peculiarities. He was not there to deplore that inevitable change; far from it, for he hoped that what the peasant lost as a Saxon he would gain as a man.

The Somersetshire pronunciation, they all knew, was commonly regarded as rough and uncouth in the extreme. Jennings, writing on the subject 30 years ago, said the dialect was "generally reckoned very harsh and inharmonious." It is identified with everything that is rude and clumsy in rustic life, and has in fact done very heavy duty as the representative of the clownish element in literature. If the character of a coarse and brutal proprietor was to be drawn, the V's and Z's were called into requisition, and *Squire Western* appeared talking very genuine Zoomerzet. Was a clown in a lower walk of life wanted? *Hob senior* and *Hob junior* played at see-saw with *zed* and *zawed* throughout the quaint comedy of *Hob in the Well*. Even the late Professor Wilson—the "Christopher North" of *Blackwood*—when he sketched an English rustic, made him come from "vamous Zomersetshaer;" and the poetical clodhopper in *Punch* is manifestly from the same county. In this way it had become identified with everything that was coarse and clownish. In opposition to this view Mr. Baynes proposed to illustrate that the pronunciation peculiar to Somersetshire, instead of being harsh and discordant, was remarkably smooth and easy—he might almost say musical, and that, so far from being as it is commonly represented to be, vulgar and corrupt, it is, on the contrary, pre-eminently pure and classical. That, he thought, was sufficiently extreme; and he should be very happy if he could succeed in tempting members of the Society into a discussion of the subject.

In order to decide this question of roughness or smoothness, softness or hardness, we must look mainly to the characteristic consonants of the dialect, since these, rather than the vowels, determine its character in this respect. As Grimm tells us, vowels are the fleeting, flowing element of sound—consonants the stable. Consonants are thus the thews and sinews, bones and muscles of the language, which give it form, definite outline, and individual character, the vowels being little more than breadth and colour. Nevertheless they must not be neglected; for, if they are the fleeting, fluent, element of sound, it follows that where they abound, the language will tend to become free, flowing and musical in its pronunciation. We see this in the Italian, which has

more vowel sounds in proportion to the consonants—altogether a richer vowel element, and is at the same time more musical than any other language. This is aptly put by old Camden, who, speaking of the Italian, says—"It is sweet and pleasant, but without sinews, as a still fleeting water;" by which he meant that it is far richer in vowel sounds than consonantal ones. It is "without sinews," as having few consonants; but "sweet and pleasant" from its abundant vowels. Now what was the position of the Somersetshire dialect in this respect? It would be found on examination that it was exceedingly rich in vowel sounds; that, in fact, the one great principle of its vowel system is the increase and multiplication of these sounds. It constantly tends to make close vowels open; long vowels short; pure words mixed; single vowels double vowels, diphthongs, and even triphthongs. The vowels were lengthened and opened in such words as the following, for example: - *Hond* and *voote*, for hand and foot; *dork* and *lorke* for dark and lark; *bade* and *dade*, for bed and dead.

We have mixed and double vowels in words like *haye*, *daye*, *maye*, *zaye*—for hay, day, may, say; *maaid* for maid, *plaaie* for plain, *cauld* for cold, *auver* for over, &c. An immense number of words that are monosyllables in common English are, in the Somersetshire dialect, converted into disyllables by this broadening and opening of the vowel sound. The following are a few examples:—*Bee*-ast—beast, *clea*-an—clean, *chee*-ase—cheese, *gee*-ame—game, *gee*-ate—gate, *mee*-olk—milk, *noo*-an—none, *nee*-ad—need, *shee*-ape—sheep, *vroat*-frost, *vi*-er—fire, *boo*-ath—both, &c.

This change in the vowels may be illustrated by a verse from Jennings's "*Good Bye to the Cot*:"—

"Good bye ta the cot! whaur tha *daye* o' my cheuldhood  
Glaw'd bright as tha sun in a morning o' *Maye*,  
When the dum'ledores hummin creaped out o' the cob-wall,  
And, *sheakin'* ther wings, tha *vleade* vooath and awaye."

Not only, however, does the dialect abound in long vowels and diphthongs; it has a number of genuine triphthongs also. The English language has very few of these, even to the eye—that is, in spelling (like *beauty*, for instance); and not more than one or two, if any, to the ear—that is, in pronunciation. But they are by no means rare in the Somersetshire dialect. Take the following short dialogue for example:—

"Whur bist *guaine*?"

"*Whoame* to vetch vayther's *quoat*."

"Make heeaste, there's a good *buoy*. Zee if the keetle, *buoils*, and tak keear of the *quoat*."

Here there are at least { Guaine—*uai*  
 four triphthongs— { Quaat—*uoa*  
                               { Buoy—*uoy*  
                               { Buolle—*uoi*

The combination *uoy* only exists in one word in English—*buoy*, a float—and there it is not sounded; but *boy*, a child, is always sounded in Somersetshire as *buoy*, a float, is spelt.

This is not all, however. There is a class of English words beginning with a couple of vowels, where the two are made to do duty for one, and thus represent only a single vowel-sound. But in Somersetshire both are fully sounded by prefixing or giving to the first the semi-vowel sound of Y. Take the word *eat* for instance. Here *ea* represent the single vowel-sound of long E—*eat*—*et*, or *ete*. But the Somersetshire man is not content to lose his vowels in this way; he is far too fond of them, and determines therefore to retain both, which he does by prefixing or rather giving to the first the semi-vowel sound of Y, and *eat* accordingly becomes *yeat*. This may be illustrated by an extract from two short dialogues lately published, which, though by no means uniformly happy in representing the dialect, seize a few words well enough—amongst others the one in question:—

Farmer *without*, driving the ducks from the garden.

Farmer: Shew!—shew!—geet out!—geet out! I wish zomebody woul zsteal thic old woman's dukes! She never gives them nothing to *yeat*, and then they comes routing about in the garden, and *yeating* up all bevore 'em.

Wife: Drat those dukes; they bē zuch zilly creature. They can't come in the garden and zstuf thursu''s quietly, they must begin quack, quack, quacking! And then old man hears 'em, and turns 'em out; so thic's a'' they geet by their talking.

Farmer (as he comes in): Thic pigs must be turned out o' the orchard. The wind ha'e blowed the apples down, and they be *yeating* away as never was.

Visitor: Without having asked your permission.

Farmer: O eze; they never does do that. Thic pig at the back o' the houze won't touch 'em tho'.

Visitor: Are they all of the same family?

Farmer: Eze, *he* be their *mother*.

Visitor: What an immense size, farmer, that pig is. She is nearly as large as a donkey, and seems quite chok-ing with fat.

Farmer: He vat! why, he beant haif a pig. I wou'dn't gi'e a penny vor zuch a pig as he. We'd *yeat* he up in vive weeks if he was made in bacon. (Laughter.)

The following are other examples of the same process:

—Yee-ast—East, yee-arn—earn, yee-ath—earth, yee-arly early.

The same takes place in words with the aspirate prefixed, the aspirate giving place to the semi-vowel Y—*e.g.*, yee-ate—heat, yee-ard—heard, yee-ade—head. This last word may be illustrated by the story of "Old Barnzo":—"Everybody knows old Barnzo as weears his *yee-ade* a one zide. One night a waz' a commin' whoame from market, and vell off 's hose into the road, a waz zo drunk. Zome chaps coming by picked 'um up, and, seein' his *yee-ade* wuz all a' one zide, they thought 'twas out o' jint, and began to pull'n into 's plee-ace again, when the auld *buoy* roared out—'Barnzo (born so) I tell 'e!' Zo a woz allus called Old Barnzo ever afterwards."

The same tendency is seen in many words, having only one vowel, but that a long one—*e.g.*, yee-ale—ale, yee-arm—arm, yee-able—able, yee-aels—eels. A similar process took place in regard to other initial vowels; but enough had already been said to illustrate this part of the subject.

They would thus see how the whole characteristic tendency of the dialect is, in this way, to broaden and multiply the vowel-sounds; and thus to make the pronunciation more smooth and fluent.

He would now turn to the consonants, where, if this tendency really existed, it must become still more apparent. They would remember that consonantal sounds were divided into various kinds, according to the different organs of speech chiefly active in their production, such as *lip-and-teeth sounds*, *tongue-and-palate sounds*, &c., and that each kind of sound was represented by two consonants, one hard, the other soft—*e.g.*, the lip-and-teeth sounds V and F—V being the soft sound of F, F the hard sound of V; so with the tongue and palate sounds, D, T, &c. We were thus furnished with an accurate and sufficient test by which to determine the hardness or softness, roughness or smoothness, of a given tongue. Now how did the Somersetshire dialect stand affected by this test? He would venture to say that all that was peculiarly characteristic in its system of consonants might be explained on the one principle of *choosing a smooth consonant rather than a rough one, a soft rather than a hard one*. In illustration of this he would take four classes of consonants, beginning with those in which this tendency is least seen, and going on to those where it is most strikingly manifested.

First of all take G and K. These are throat-sounds, K being hard, G soft; but there was this to be said about them, that, being throat-sounds, and thus less agreeable than most others, there would be a natural tendency to soften and suppress both. G is softened at the beginning

of such words as the following:—Guaine—going, gee—ame—game, gee—ate—gate. Here the broadening of the vowel-sound tends to soften the initial consonant, so that it becomes quite a weak breathing. At the end of words, as a general rule, but especially of words ending in *ng*, the *G* goes out altogether—*e.g.*, courtin—courting, weddin—wedding, varden—farthing, doomplin—dumpling, puddun—pudding, marnin—morning. They might have instances innumerable of this any Saturday on going early to market, in the greetings flying about from one bustling market-woman to another—“Marnin s'marnin; vine marnin s'marnin; how be s'marnin.” (Laughter.) *K* is softened in the same way as *G*, by increasing the vowel-sound at the beginning of such words as these:—Quoat—coat, quoin—coin, quine—corner, quoit—coit. In *cuckoo*, and a few other words, it is softened to *G*, cuckoo being universally pronounced *gookoo*. There are not many cases of its being softened or excluded at the end of a word. Pulman, however, in his “Rustic Sketches,” says that the word “pickaxe” is always pronounced pickass, in which case the *K* has gone out altogether.

He would pass on to a more characteristic pair of consonants—the tongue and palate sounds *D* and *T*—*D* of course being soft, *T* hard. There is a strong tendency in the dialect to soften *T* to *D*—*e.g.*, bedder—better, budder—butter, beeadle—beetle, boddum—bottom, liddle—little, nodis—notice, maddick—mattock, cuddy—cutty (wren). Pulman, in some verses on “Summer,” says:—

“Th' vlowers all bright an' gay  
Wi' swit pervume da seeynt th' air,  
An' th' wopses and butterflys da share  
Their switness dru th' day.”

Not only, however, is the hard *T* thus softened to *D*; the still harder *TH* is often changed to *D* also. *TH* is a tongue and teeth sound, and there was as they knew (though unrepresented by any difference of letter) a hard and soft sound of *TH*. The great majority of English words beginning with these letters have the hard sound; but this is almost unknown in Somersetshire. Indeed he doubted whether it existed at all, for he thought it would be found that the genuine natives always tended to give such words as *thank*, *think*, *thing*, the soft sound instead of the hard. This was indeed to be expected, for the greater includes the less, and he was now about to show that there was a strong tendency to soften the hard *TH* not only into the soft *TH*, but into the still softer *D*, *e.g.*, Droo—through, drie—three, dirah—thrush, dreaten—threaten, drow—throw, drash—thrash, drashel—threshold, droate—throat, varden—farthing.

A still more characteristic pair of consonants came now

to be considered—the lip-and-teeth-sounds *V* and *F*. The substitution of *V* for *F* was one of the two great notorious marks of the Somersetshire dialect, by which it was known and recognised all the world over, the other being the change of *S* to *Z*. He might here notice rather a strange remark which Jennings makes on these changes. Opposing the general notion that the dialect is inharmonious, he says—“Except in its frequent and unpleasant use of *Z* for *S*, and *V* for *F*, I do not think it will be found so deficient in agreeable sounds as has been commonly supposed,” which, as these are almost the only consonantal peculiarities he notices, is really very like saying, “except in its chief characteristics,” &c.—rather a serious, in fact utterly suicidal, exception to make when the object in view is to establish something about the very dialect thus characterised. If *V* and *Z* really were more harsh and disagreeable sounds than *F* and *S*, it would be difficult indeed to prove that the direct was characteristically smooth and easy. The reverse, however, is of course the fact, *V* and *Z* being the softened sound of *F* and *S* respectively.

At the end of words, too, where *F* has the sharp sound in English, it is in the Somerset dialect changed into *V*, *e.g.*, Turve—turf, hooave—hoof, looaev—loaf, leeave, —leaf, kee-ave—calf, wiave—wife.

The next pair of consonants, *Z* and *S*, the most celebrated in the dialect, are conveniently represented in the very name of the county itself—“Zoomeretzheere.” These are tongue-and-palate sounds, *S* hard, *Z* soft; and it is the hard sound of *S* which gives to our language that sibilant character so much complained of by foreigners, and sometimes by natives also. Lord Byron, comparing Italian with English, describes the latter as—

“Our harsh northern whistling, grunting, guttural,”  
Which we are obliged to hiss and spit and splutter all.”

The hissing, spitting sound here referred to is that of the letter in question. Of course we may naturally expect to find this softened in the Somersetshire dialect, and we find it is so universally. At the beginning of a word *S* is always changed to *Z*. This is so well known that a single illustration will suffice. Take the following, the first verse of the parable of the sower, translated into the dialect:—“Yee-arken, behold a Zower went vooath to Zow, and as a Zooed, Zoomo Zeead vell by the waye Zide, an the vowlas o' the ayre did yeat it up.”

Only one other consonant remained to be considered—the letter *R*; and he was the more anxious to say something about this letter because its treatment in the dialect, though in many respects very curious, had rarely been noticed, even in isolated works, and never referred to as a general characteristic at all. The letter *R* stands alone;

it is rough by nature and in its own right. Like S, it is a tongue and palate sound, and with it is distinguished for strength rather than for euphony, the one being pre-eminently the hissing; the other the harsh, vibrating sound of the language. In the modern London pronunciation the R in the middle or towards the end of a syllable tends to go out; so that words like *work*, *word*, *world*, become *wawck*, *waud*, *waulde*. In the Cockney, or corrupted London pronunciation, indeed, there is a system of compensation at work, by which the R's that have been unceremoniously thrown out from the middle of words to which they belong are charitably taken in again at the end, where they have no business; and young ladies and gentlemen who would think it "ba'bawous" and a "boaw" to sound the R in its proper place, speak nevertheless of *Par* and *Mar*, *Mariar* and *Sophiar*, the *Crimear* and the *Almar*, without having the least idea that there is any inconsistency in so doing. (Laughter.) This is, of course, a mere vulgarism. But in the best pronunciation—the pronunciation of the best, the most refined and cultivated people—there is a growing tendency to soften the R as much as possible. This might be seen even in its exaggeration in the language of the "fast" men of the day. The swell or exquisite of any period generally represents in extreme the fashionable tendencies of the time. No doubt he exaggerates them, but still he represents them, and is therefore useful and valuable to us even in his absurdity. Now in modern novels, dramas and satirical poetry in general, it will be found that the exquisite of that period—

"The fine young English gentleman, one of the modern time," is represented as speaking a peculiar dialect, the main feature of which consists in the exclusion of the letter R.

He was not going to decide whether this dialect was polished and refined; he simply said that, whatever polish and refinement it possessed, he really must claim, on behalf of the rustics of Somersetshire, who displayed as great a horror of the letter R, and were as anxious to suppress it where they could, and soften it in all possible ways where they could not, as the greatest exquisite that lounges in St. James's or airs himself in Rotten Row.

In the next place, it was often softened by transposition, and this in two cases particularly—1. At the beginning of a word. All who have discussed the subject agree that, however R may be softened or suppressed at the end of a word or syllable, it must be sounded, and strongly sounded, when it begins a word. Now there are a number of words in the Somerset dialect in which this necessity is to a certain extent evaded, and the initial R

softened by transposition. As a general rule, the R changes places with the vowel, and the aspirate is added. The following are illustrations:—*Hirn*—run, *hird*—rid, *hurd*—red, *hirsch*—rich, *Hirchet*—Richard, *hirale*—rustle, *hirah*—hush. 2. When it follows another consonant. A similar transposition takes place after another consonant, in such words as the following:—*Birge*—bridge, *birsh*—brush, *dirah*—thrush, *dird*—thread, *ourmeon*—crimson, *curse*—cress, *Kiramas*—Christmas, *kiraning*—christening, *girt*—great, *girn*—grin, *gurdled*—griddled, *be-gurge*—begrudge, *apurn*—apron, &c. The sixth word in the list—*curse*, *cress*—gives us the true and simple explanation of a common phrase which sounded at first hearing desperate and profane in the extreme, and probably when now used often really is so, but which was nevertheless, in its original use and meaning, innocent enough. The phrase in question is, "I don't care a *curse* for it," which is only another form of phrase still more common, being strictly synonymous with "I don't care a *straw* or a *rush*." And the meaning in either case, of course, "I don't care a *straw*—a *rush*—a *cress*,"—anything so common, so worthless, as a *rush* or a *cress*, which is to be found in any ditch by the road side—"I don't care even *that* about the matter."

This closed the review of the consonants. They had seen the principle laid down at the outset working throughout the entire examination—that soft sounds were preferred to hard, smooth consonants to rough; that this system of softening reached its climax—became most elaborate and minute—in relation to the two consonants that were harshest and roughest in the language—R and S; and it was difficult therefore to resist the conclusion that a dialect of which these were the peculiarities was in its pronunciation characteristically smooth and easy. (Applause.)

He had proposed to show that it was also "pure and classical"—by which he meant that its leading features were not provincial corruptions of modern English, but genuine remains of classic Anglo-Saxon; but he had already sufficiently occupied their time, and this part of the subject must be left for a future occasion.

In mixing with the West Somerset rustics, our readers may have heard the following extraordinary and apparently impious expression:—"Please God and the pigs." For many hours we have pondered on its strange character; but the following appears to be an explanation:—In the Saxon language the name for girl or virgin is *piga*, or *pige*; so that we have "Please God and the Virgin," probably a remnant of Roman Catholic days and a proof of Danish occupation in England.

An interesting article on Somersetshire appeared in the *London Quarterly Review*, October, 1871, by an able pen, well acquainted with our Local History; and from it we have made the following extracts, which relate to this part of the county:—

There are few parts of England that have been so frequently connected with the noteworthy events of our past history as the county of Somerset. For centuries it was the battle-field of the Belgæ, and here the Romans established camps and stations, built luxurious villas, and worked the mines of Brendon and Mendip. At Cadbury Camp, the Camelot of the old typographers Arthur is supposed to have kept his round table, in the interlude of fighting the Saxons. In the Isle of Athelney Alfred found a safe retreat in evil days, and from the length and breadth of Somerset called the best part of that army which conquered the invading Danes. Compared with these early annals, the battle of Lansdown and Blake's noble defence of Taunton appear quite like modern events. Another episode in English history, the scene of which is laid in Somerset, is the battle of Sedgmoor. Local traditions connected with "King Monmouth" are still passed from sire to son in the marsh district.

Added to this, the ecclesiastical history of the county is one of great interest. Glastenbury claims to be the site of the first Christian shrine built in Britain.

The good saint,  
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying came  
To Glastenbury, . . . .  
And there he built, with wattles from the marsh,  
A little lonely church in days of yore.

So says Tennyson in telling the legends of the Holy Grail and the Winter Thorn, "mindful of our Lord." Then arose the noble abbeys, glorious still in ruin, and the goodly parish churches, rich in architectural beauty. These are among the many points of interest connected with the county. There is an open discussion as to whether the Gael really preceded the Kymri in the occupation of this country.

The minerals of the Mendip and Brendon hills were known at a very early period.

Besides the ranges known as the Mendips, the Polden, the Quantocks, the Brendon, and the boundary line of Blackdown, there are in central Somerset many insular eminences which were favourable for occupation and defence, and on these the Celtic tribes established themselves. At Banwell, at Brentknoll, on the Quantocks, at Neroche Castle, above Ilminster, in various places above the river Axe, on Hamdon-hill, and to the West of the Brendon-hills, proofs have been found of these early settlements.

Four great Roman roads traversed Somersetshire. The Romans settled more in the Eastern than in the Western part of the county, though in the extreme West, on the Brendon-hills, there is evidence of their presence for mining purposes.

It is said that when the Roman legions finally left Britain they embarked at Uphill Bay, near Weston-super-Mare. Bath itself was conquered and laid waste by the Saxons in 576 A.D.; but legendary lore relates that its fate was some time protracted by King Arthur, who, it is said, defeated the Saxons on Lansdown. The evidences of Roman occupation are very numerous. Near Langport both coins and pottery are often found; and not far from there is the villa of Pitney, which has a most beautiful tessellated pavement. Judging from the state of the Hamhill stone, which was used in the construction, the villa was probably destroyed by fire. "A hundred years," says Mr. Jones, "this locality had been the battle-field of the Romano-British, who were Christians, and the pagan Saxons," which accounts for the great destruction of the Roman civilisation in these parts.

It is not too much to say that the whole of this neighbourhood was dotted with villas, so numerous are the remains. Like the extensive villa at Combe St. Nicholas, which deserve special mention, they were all provided with a hypocaust and baths, together with outbuildings, enclosed by a boundary wall, proving the extensive and luxurious character of the structure.

The mining operations of the Romans have been abundantly traced on the Somersetshire hills. On the Mendips they have been actually employed in the present day, in re-working the refuse of an old Roman lead mine.

The Romans also worked the iron mines on the Brendon hills, and made use of the brown hematite. In this locality some remarkable implements of wood and a powerful pickaxe, supposed to belong to the Roman period, were found. These things, together with a quantity of local curiosities, may be seen at the Taunton Museum. These local museums deserve attention and support, for specimens which are lost in a great national collection are of immense interest and value in the neighbourhood whose history they serve to exemplify. The town of Taunton has shown a good example in this respect, and has preserved to the county some very important collections, illustrative both of the natural history and of the archæology of Somerset.

Referring to the early times of which we have been speaking, it may be mentioned that Gildas "the Querulous" gives us a glimpse of the West after the decline of the Roman rule. Dissatisfied with the world, he sought quiet and repose on an island rock in "the Severne Sea."



But even here there was no rest for him, inasmuch as the pirates of that day made this rock their retreat; and seeing no end to their plunder, rapine, and sacrilege, Gildas quitted the place, and, crossing over to the mainland of Somerset, betook himself to Glastonbury. Here, very probably, he wrote some part of his history, wherein he describes that "the Gospel was brought to Britain, an island stiff with frost, lying in a distant corner of the world, not very near the sun."

It is a favourite belief in the West that Joseph of Arimathea and Simon Zelotes were sent by St. Philip from Gaul into Britain to preach the Gospel, and that they founded a church at Avalon, viz., Glastonbury. (Although Glastonbury is not in the district of West Somerset, a few extracts on this very interesting spot will probably please our readers.) The legend proceeds to state that St. Joseph's staff had been cut from a thorn-tree in the Holy Land, and that when stuck into the ground it took root and flourished, and in proof of its origin blossomed miraculously at Christmas ever after.

A halo of poetry and superstition encircles the lonely Tor of Glastonbury, which stands and has stood in all Christian times as a shrine and a landmark in the wide and pleasant vale of central Somerset. Beneath its shadow King Arthur is believed to have been buried. To doubt the facts of his life or his place of burial is an unforgivable heresy in the West. The chronicles of the times, such as they are, certainly associate the deeds of King Arthur with all this district.

The palace of King Arthur, which Leland describes as "a castle upon a very Torre, wonderfully enstrengthened of nature," was, according to legend, supposed to have been built by the great magician, Merlin. Tennyson, in that beautiful series of poems called *The Holy Grail*, gives a marvellous word-picture of the "sacred mount of Camelot."

The modern pilgrim to the Somersetshire shrines should take Tennyson's Arthurian poems in his pocket. They are full of local pictures, which recreate past traditions, and place them in the frame of living nature and of real scenery.

The known geographical changes permit the supposition that Arthur was brought to the Abbey of Glastonbury by water. That he died and was buried there was believed in the time of Henry the Second, who caused his remains to be sought for.

In these days of lady doctors, it may not be uninteresting to mention that a MS. Latin poem \* in the British

Museum particularly describes that there dwelt in Glastonbury nine sisters skilled in the healing art, one of whom greatly excelled the rest, and whose fame was spread far and near. Her name was Morgana. King Arthur, it would seem, specially desired to consult her and her sisters when wounded in his last battle.

Besides robbing the Irish of St. Patrick, who, it appears now, was a Somersetshire gentleman, born under the shadow of the Tor, Glastonbury also claims to be the birthplace of St. Dunstan.

We all know the story of his pinching the Devil's nose with his red-hot crucible tongs, and how the foul fiend ran down Glastonbury-street shouting, "Oh, what has the bald-head done?"

Leaving the half-fabulous lives of the saints, we approach something like the firm ground of history when we mention the name of Alfred the Great. After his reverses near Frome, Alfred retired to Athelney, in those days a little island formed by the stagnant waters of the Parrett and the Tone. It is supposed that he remained concealed there for a year, while he carefully concerted his measures against the Danes. During this time popular belief credits him with the incident of burning the good wife's cakes; and, pending his forced retreat from public affairs, he is said to have lost from his neck a valuable ornament of gold and enamel. This trinket, strangely enough, was found in the seventeenth century, and is now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum. The chroniclers state that Alfred well knew that the Western counties formed the strength and, indeed, the last hope of his kingdom. He waited at Athelney till he heard that the men of Somerset and the adjoining counties were ready to obey his call. All the West obeyed that summons. Mendip sent forth her rough miners, the Quantocks her weather-beaten shepherds; and from the low dank meres and from the rich vales men of strength and courage went to swell the army of their king. Every abbey, cell, and convent sent their dependents; for the cause of Alfred was the cause of the Church. To celebrate his victory over the Danes, he founded a Benedictine Abbey at Athelney, of which now there are no remains; but several coffins, encaustic tiles, bosses, and other relics, have been found on the site.

Not far from here is the village of Aller, where, it is said, Guthrun the Dane was baptised, after his defeat at Edington. A very ancient font was dug out of a pond in the vicarage garden, some years ago, and replaced in the church; and no one can assert that it is not the identical font in which the Dane and his followers were made Christians.

In the reign of Alfred's son and successor, Edward the

\* *Vita Merlini per Galfridum Monumeten sum versu Herico ad Robertum Lincolnensem.*



Elder, we have the earliest specimens yet discovered of a coin struck in a Somersetshire mint. In the Anglo-Saxon times moneyers were established at Bath, Ilchester, Taunton, Watchet, Crewkerne, Bruton, Cadbury, and Langport.

The Norman element introduced into Somersetshire after the Conquest must have been overwhelming. William de Mohun was given fifty manors of land in the county.

At the time of Matilda and Stephen, it is said that there were no less than 1,100 castles built in England, and certainly Somersetshire had her share. With the exception of Taunton, which had been a stronghold of King Ins, all the Somersetshire castles were of Norman erection. The "castle builders" were the object of peculiar hatred to the Saxons.

The following Norman names occur in connection with Somersetshire:—William de Briwere built Bridgwater Castle; William de Mohun, that of Dunster, portions of which remain to this day; Nunney Castle was erected by Sir John Delamere, and Castle Cary owed its fortress to Robert, Lord of Breherval, one of the companions of the Conqueror, whose son, Axelin, was surnamed *Lupus*, from the fierceness of his disposition. In after times the sobriquet was softened down into Lupel or Luvell, and lastly Lovel, by which the family was best known. Stogursey was built by the De Courcys. Very few remains of this moated castle are traceable, for it had become such a stronghold of robbers that it was dismantled by the express order of the sheriff. The Somersetshire nobles were somewhat conspicuous for their lawlessness; two of Thomas à Beckett's murderers belonged to the county. Fitzurse had a residence at Wilton-in-the-Vale, between the Quantock and the Brendon Hills; and Woodspring Priory, near Clevedon, was built by William de Courtenay, in expiation of the crime of his ancestor, Tracey, of whom it is said "the Traceys have always the wind in their faces." A mural reliquary found in Kewstoke Church, and supposed to have been transplanted from the adjoining priory, is believed to contain some of Thomas à Beckett's blood. It is preserved in the Taunton Museum. The characteristic boldness of the men of the West happily turned into more legitimate channels when the mediæval borough began to supersede the baronial castle. The trade of the towns promoted distant explorations, and we find Sebastian Cabot getting together the crews for his celebrated expeditions from Bristol and Bridgwater; at the latter place the sailors were renowned for their love of enterprise. Amongst the local events which do not come to the surface of history we may mention an attack upon Taunton by the Cornish miners. It seems they were angry at a newly-imposed tax levied upon them by Henry the VII., and in conse-

quence the Provost of Penrhyn, who had become obnoxious to them, fled and took refuge in Taunton Castle. The rioters followed him, besieged the place in 1490, dragging out the Provost and murder him out of hand. It appears that in the following year the Cornish miners, now under command of Perkin Warbeck, occupied Taunton, but finally dispersed on hearing that the King had sent a large army against them.

Reverting to the mediæval borough, with its municipal element, we shall find few better illustrations of the development of the modern political edifice than in the growth of the Somersetshire towns, which were relatively of far greater importance than they are at present. The West was foremost in the market for the manufacture of woollen goods. Formerly *Bridgwaters*, *Tauntons* and *Dunsters* were as well-known fabrics as Spitalfield silks and Manchester cottons are now. The trade was of great antiquity, for we find that as early as 1389 the Parliament required that "the broadcloth much made in Somerset shall not be sold tied up and rolled, but shall be displayed to the purchaser."

Amongst the manufacturers clustered at Backway, was one Thomas Blanket, who is said to have given his name to that comfortable article.

In the 14th century an immense amount of church restorations and church-building was completed; but, preferring to speak on the subject further on, at present we will glance at the share taken by Somersetshire in the Civil War.

Charles the First took up his quarters for a week at Chard, and from thence issued a proclamation inviting "speedy peace;" but instead came war, with its bitter "part takings." For a time the West was the principal theatre of action. At Lansdown, near Bath, was fought the well-known battle, and later in the open country near Langport there was a fierce engagement.

We have now come to the time of the castle-breakers. Nearly all the Somersetshire fortresses stood siege for one side or the other. Dunster Castle was besieged by Blake. The Governor, Colonel Wyndham, made a brief resistance, and the struggle lasted some days. The old marketplace in the picturesque little town still bears evidence of the shots.

Bridgwater Castle, now no more, had walls fifteen feet in thickness. This place, from its great strength, was considered impregnable, and attracted together the Royalists from all the adjacent country, who took thither their moveable treasures. The Prince of Wales was there for a time in person, and more than once summoned a council of "loyal justices." During this time Cromwell came to look after the siege, and nearly lost his life out-

side the walls of Bridgwater. It is said that while crossing the river Parrett he was nearly drowned by a sudden surprisal of the tidal wave—the Bore or Eager, as it is locally called.

After Bridgwater was taken the property found there was sent to London to be sold for the benefit of the soldiers who had stormed the town.

The chief interest of the struggle in this county centres at Taunton, “which place,” says Lord Macaulay, “was defended with heroic valour by Robert Blake, afterwards the renowned admiral of the Commonwealth.”

Throughout all the changes of this troubled time Taunton had stoutly adhered to the Parliament. The religious feeling of the townsmen, then a wealthy body of traders, was strongly Presbyterian. The possession of Taunton was a master-stroke of policy on the part of Blake, and the Royalists well knew the importance of the place. They sent their best men to attempt its reduction, and “Goring’s Crew” was long remembered with execration in the surrounding country, which they ruthlessly despoiled.

Without walls, without military defences, and against overwhelming numbers, the town of Taunton endured for fifty days an active siege. Again, after a brief respite, it maintained its resistance for five weeks longer, “in all making,” says Mr. Hepworth Dixon, “exactly a year as the duration of this marvellous and successful defence.” The moral effect of such patient as well as active heroism told favourably for the Puritan cause throughout England. The City of London was about to send succour, when, one Sunday morning, Blake, who was watching from the summit of “Marlin Tower,” descried deliverance coming up from the West. While the Sabbath-bells were calling the starving citizens from out the burnt and battered streets to the house of God, the army of deliverance was visibly winding its way, with glittering spears, over the hill side of Blagdon. Their town was saved! Their children would have bread! The prayers of that morning’s service were turned into heartfelt thanksgivings. The anniversary of the day was long kept in Taunton.

Blake was born at Bridgwater, and had nearly attained the age of fifty before his great talents for military and naval command was first called into action. Throughout his brilliant career, which dates from the early successes in his native county, he never forgot his love for Somersetshire, and it is a curious circumstance that he always kept a Bridgwater man near his person that he might talk of the old place and people.

Several Somersetshire families suffered for their defence of royalty—amongst others the Berkeleys of Yarlington, the Berkeleys of Pylle; the Marquis of Hertford lost all his estates in Castle Cary, Ansford, and Dunman, by

sequestration; Sir John Stawell, of Cothelstone, endured grievous injury—“being” as Collinson says, “a person zealously affected to the cause of his Sovereign, for whom he raised, at his own expense, three regiments of horse and one of foot.” He exposed himself to the malevolence and persecution of the Parliament, who imprisoned him in Newgate, sold his lands, cut down his woods, and demolished his mansion at Cothelstone, which had been but recently built in the Italian style.

Oldmixon, the historian, himself a Somersetshire man, tells the following story with evident satisfaction, for he can magnanimously pity the Royalists, who have been ill-treated by their own party. After the restoration Sir John Stawell took the opportunity of telling Charles the Second that he had a son who loved dogs, and, being fit for nothing but the country, he begged for him the office of keeper of the buckhounds—a place then vacant. The King refused the favour; whereupon Sir John took the liberty to represent that he had expended in his Majesty’s service and been sequestered to the amount of £105,000. The King replied, “You might have compounded, and saved a good part of it, and sent it to me.” “Sire,” replied Sir John, “since it is so, I have four sons, and I shall give them advice, not to venture any more for any monarch in England.”

Lord Macaulay’s *History* has made the episode of the Monmouth rebellion so familiar to us that we shall only glance at events that for the time turned the eyes of all England upon Somersetshire. The Duke was received at Taunton with the wildest enthusiasm, for the people beheld in him the defender of the Protestant faith. When he reached Bridgwater “his army consisted of about six thousand men, and might have been easily increased to double that number, but for want of arms.” None of his followers were much above the yeoman class. The Whig aristocracy stood aloof to a man, and he had hardly left Bridgwater when Monmouth’s manner betrayed his declining hopes. He reached Glastonbury the first night of his march, and his troops bivouacked in the Abbey, lighting their watch fires among the picturesque ruins. After some counter marches and much indecision he returned to Bridgwater on the 2nd of July, and four days later was fought the battle of Sedgemoor, “the last fight deserving the name of battle that has been fought on English ground.” To this day, the plough not unfrequently turns up grim relics of the fight. It will be remembered that the bodies of more than a thousand rebels and three hundred of the King’s soldiers lay on that marsh field. It is still intersected by the *rhines*, or ditches, that were so fatal to Monmouth’s army on that disastrous 6th of July, 1685.

A very remarkable novel, bearing the title of *Lorna Doone*, has recently appeared, which is so far historical that it treats incidentally of this period. Its chief merits, however, are the admirable descriptions of scenery, of local habits and manners in the olden time, and the mingled humour and pathos of the story—a story which is doubly interesting to those who know the wild and beautiful country round Porlock Bay.

"The Black Assize," the terrible sequel to the Monmouth rebellion, is even yet remembered by family tradition in the West. Colonel Kirke hung members of the rebels on the sign-post of the White Hart Inn, at Taunton, without even the form of trial; but it was left for Jeffreys, in his judicial character, to perpetrate those atrocities that have caused his name to be execrated in all after time.

According to Matthew of Westminster, Muchelney Abbey, near Langport, was also founded in the Anglo-Saxon times, by the pious Athelstan.

Local tradition says that Fair Rosamond was born at Cannington, and that she received her education at this priory.

Somersetshire is, perhaps, the richest district in England for the remains of Middle Age domestic architecture, especially of the fifteenth century. At Meare there are remains of an earlier date, which are of a very unique character—viz., a *cottage* of the time of Edward the Third. It is called the "flah-house," and belonged to the Abbey of Glastonbury. Great changes have taken place in this place, and where fields are now there existed, as late as Henry the Eighth, a lake called "the Meare Poole, in circuite fyve myles, and one myle and half brode." There is also, near here, the Abbot's house. Mr. Parker has enlarged on these particular buildings. He remarks: "It was usual with our ancestors to build their houses, so to speak, upon vaults. These were now called ambulatories, cloisters, and other names, but the fact was they were used for whatever purposes they were required." At Meare there is one great hall or banqueting-room, which was probably used for general purposes; it was not till a later date that the more private apartments, such as drawing and withdrawing rooms, were introduced.

At Martock there is a very perfectly preserved old manor house, with decorated tracery in the windows; also Greenham House, near Milverton, is another example of fourteenth-century work. But the glory of Somersetshire architecture is the "Local Perpendicular," as it is called. When Lord Macaulay's ideal "stranger" climbed the tower of St. Mary Magdalen, Taunton, in the days of "King Monmouth," he is described as seeing "the most fertile of English valleys, and, scattered around, manor-

houses, cottages, and village spires." Unfortunately for the accuracy of the picture, *towers*, not spires, are the characteristic feature of the landscape. To name the beautiful towers of Somersetshire would be to name half the parishes therein. Mr. Freeman says, "The towers are considered to maintain their supremacy over all others in the country." It is impossible not to be struck with the number and beauty of the ecclesiastical buildings of the time of Henry VII. There is a current belief that Henry rebuilt many of the Somersetshire churches as a reward for the support given by the people to the Lancastrian party. Some of his friends were very well placed in the West. Richard Fox, who had helped him to the Throne, was Bishop of Wells, and Dr. Oliver King, a great favourite with the monarch, was Archdeacon of Taunton. The probability, however, is that we must look deeper for the solution of the problem.

The Somersetshire Perpendicular church is thus described by Mr. Freeman. He says, "It generally consists of a lofty and elaborate Western tower, standing disengaged from the aisles; a nave and aisles, with or without a clerestory, according to circumstances, and with very commonly a large Southern porch, as high as the aisles. A high-roofed chancel, containing traces more or less extensive of earlier work. There is a tendency to polygonal turrets in various positions West of the aisles. Pierced and other enriched parapets are common. The roofs are of various kinds, but the coved roof is typical in the West. The interiors are rich in screens and other kinds of wood-work." The beautifully-carved seat-ends of many of these churches deserve special notice. Kingston, Broomfield, Spaxton and South Brent are among the number. At Spaxton there is what is called "the Fuller's Panel," which represents a workman with his tools, occupied in cloth-making. At South Brent some of the carvings are very quaint, showing how the satirists of the day indulged their humour. On one of these bench-ends is the figure of a fox adorned with a mitre and a crozier. There are, besides, many other strange devices which illustrate the temper of the times and show something of the bitter quarrel long subsisting between the monks and the parochial clergy.

The beauty of the Somersetshire towers is much enhanced by their picturesque surroundings—Dundry crowning the peak of its lofty hill, Kingston relieved by the wooded Quantocks, and Hutton nestling among its elms.

A good deal of Perpendicular work may be found in the monastic ruins of Somersetshire, especially at Cleeve Abbey, situated in the *Vallis Florida* of the Romans, and still one of the loveliest spots in England; also at Muchelney Abbey.

Mr. Parker has more than once observed, that "Somersetshire is the richest county in England for old houses." There is hardly a parish that does not contain an Elizabethan dwelling, or one more ancient still. Among the most noteworthy of the old mansions is Montacute House, near Yeovil, an important and beautiful structure, built of the Hamhill stone, which supplied the excellent and lasting material of so many of the Somersetshire buildings. The East and West fronts of Montacute are elaborately ornamented; the former is pierced with no less than forty-one Tudor windows, while the spaces between them are filled with statues. Over the principal entrance is the hospitable motto—

Through this wide opening gate  
None come too early, none return too late.

Barrington Court is a very fine example of a nobleman's house of the latest Tudor style; it is a large quadrangular mass, with projecting wings, the walls perfect with their numerous turrets, small gables, twisted chimneys, pinnacles, and finials, all of stone and richly carved.

Somerset Court, in the parish of South Brent, though an old house, is not remarkable architecturally.

There is hardly a village in the Western part of the county where you may not find some relics of picturesque antiquity. It often happens that the principal farm-house in the parish is formed from a portion of the ancient manor-house, and the chapel, as at Banwell Court, turned into a cider cellar. The dove-cots, the pillion-steps, the shattered cross, the old yew tree, or the weird ash in the village green, all speak of the past. Besides, there is many a deep lane, fringed with fern and briony, which an archæologist will tell you was a British trackway ages before the crumbling manor-house was raised, or the yew tree planted for the parish bowmen.

There has been a great deal of good taste and judgment shown in most of the recent restorations. The plan generally followed has been that of preservation, or reconstruction, of the old model.

Over Stowey owes its restoration to the late Lord Taunton, and we may name Stoke de Courcy, Westonzoyland, and St. John's, Glastonbury. Walton, East Lydford, and King's Weston, have been entirely rebuilt on the old sites. Winscombe and Badgworth have been admirably restored. Mark in the Moor, with its historical tower, is going through a gradual process of restoration as the funds come in. In short, a summer day's ride from any given point across the country would prove the active interest which is taken in the preservation of the grand old churches.

We have something to say now about the people who fill these churches and many a Dissenting place of worship

beside. Fuller, who remarks pertinently on most things, speaks of the extreme fertility of Taunton Deane, but takes occasion to add, that "the peasantry are rich as they are rude, and so conceited about the fruitfulness produced by 'sun and soil,' that they consider it a disparagement to be born in any other place." We knew a labourer apologise once for the stupidity of a fellow workman by saying, "How can *her* know better? *her's* from Devon!" "*Her*" means *he*. Another peculiar manner of using the pronoun is to be found exhibited on a tombstone in the churchyard of St. Dubritius, near Porlock:—

As us am, so must ye be;  
Therefore prepare to follow we.

Since Fuller's time we have done something towards education, but not very much in the rural districts, where children often leave school at the age of ten years and enter upon the drudgery of life. Middle-class schools, too, are very much wanted in the West; the children of small farmers are often more ignorant than the labourers themselves. The most uncouth among the natives of Somersetshire are, perhaps, to be found in the Bridgwater Marsh. In those aguish lands there are few resident gentry, and the clergy have to contend with ignorance amongst the farmers, and drunkenness in the labourers. The farmer sets himself "*agin thic thaer chemistry*"—at least, the elder generation, and says indignantly—

I be a Zummerset varmer, one of the woolden skule;  
I hates them modern wise uns tha' takes I var a vool.  
Much larning esent woonted a managing a varm:  
Ef thay knows tha whay to reside an rite, muore only does um harm.

These sort of people have an odd way of expressing themselves sometimes. The parson of a parish in central Somerset one day, about Midsummer, asked the blacksmith, who was a landed proprietor and owned two acres of orchard, what he thought of the apples? He replied, with an animated gesture, "Please God, we shall have a terrible fine crop; but please Him or no, we shall have a goodish lot!" The man meant no irreverence, but wished to convey the idea that a portion of the crop was saved beyond the chances of weather.

Cider is the curse of the county. A poor man being asked what he would do if he were rich, replied, "I'd sit and drink zider all day, and when I couldn't sit I'd lie!" The tone of morality is not high in the rural districts; the common remark is not, "How wicked to do so and so!" but, "How voolish *her* be to be vound out!" These observations are not meant to be sweeping; but, truth to say, there is a vast field for missionary labour amongst our own people in the West.

There are several noteworthy peculiarities in the Somersetshire dialect; they use *s* for *a*, *v* for *f*; and many words

of one syllable they pronounce as words of two: such as "world" is *war-dle*, and "run" is *herne*. "Dout the candle" is a Somersetshire expression. "Barton" is a farmyard, and "tallet" a corn-loft over the stable. In the rich alluvial districts the wealth of the graziers, who are quite a peculiar class, has passed into a proverb.

To instance the richness of the soil, three weeks or a month is generally considered long enough "to let up" the grass for mowing. The average price of labour in this district is twelve shillings a week in summer. In hay-making and harvest time the wages are often four and sixpence an acre, with cider, and sometimes food. A man can mow about an acre a day; but, to set against this, numbers are thrown out of employ in the winter. At that time they take jobs of road-making or hedging; some of them take to shooting snipes and wild ducks, or go off to join draining-gangs.

During the last fifteen years, the farmers throughout the country have been more or less eager to adopt an improved system of agriculture. Steam is now almost universally used on the farm. It is a curious fact that rats are very much on the increase, in consequence, it is said, of the steam-threshing being conducted at different parts of the farm, when, of course, the refuse gets dispersed, and these voracious colonists are attracted thereby. Underground draining is being carried on extensively, while successional crops and liberal dressing tend to compensate the exhaustion of the soil. The improvement in the farms has kept pace with the beneficial extension of the Bath and West of England Agricultural Society, which has brought modern inventions home to the people. This Society, which is now only second in importance to the Royal Agricultural Society, owed its existence to a literary quaker, named Edmund Rack, who settled in Bath in 1775. About twenty years ago a fresh impetus was given to it, chiefly by Somersetshire men.

Formerly it would have been deemed absurd to consider agriculture from a geological point of view; but the bearings of economic geology are daily becoming more and more understood. There is a correlation in all human discoveries: when one branch of knowledge advances, another becomes interdependent, and every new fact is a beacon for future progress. While endeavouring to estimate the relative fertility of different strata, we must consider local conditions—aspect, height from the sea, &c. Allowing for these circumstances, we may take Somerset as fairly exemplifying the general fertility of the red sandstone, the lesser productiveness of the blue lias, and the still less favourable conditions offered by the flint gravel, which often covers the upper green sand. The lias appears more suitable for grass than for arable land.

The red marls appear very favourable to the growth of apples. "The apple," says Mr. Whitaker, "seems to have been brought into Britain by the first colonists. The Hadni introduced it into Somersetshire." Teasels and wead are grown in this county—both, of course, connected with the cloth trade.

M'Culloch says that the vale of Taunton is the most fertile district in England; but local opinion is in favour of the Bridgwater Marsh. On the other side, there are no less than 20,000 acres of waste land in Exmoor; at least there were, for a portion has been reclaimed, and but for the strong winds and mists that prevail in that elevated region the soil would not prove ungrateful. M. Léonce deLavergue, in his interesting volume, *Economie Rurale de l'Angleterre*, was surprised that the working classes of Somerset were so badly off, considering that they had such important markets as Bristol and Bath; and he considered that the only remedy was an increase of production or a decrease of population. It would appear that Somersetshire does need, and would repay, the investment of a larger amount of capital on sound commercial principles. If, for instance, the idea was carried out of a steam-ferry from Bream Down, a promontory intersecting the estuary of the Severn near Weston-super-Mare—if, we repeat, a steam-ferry were made thence to the Welsh coast, a vast amount of trade would necessarily be developed. The agricultural produce of Dorset and Somerset would readily send food to the insufficiently-supplied mining districts in Wales.

In Somersetshire it is calculated that about one person in eight is engaged in agriculture. About 17,000 out of a population of less than half a million belong to the manufacturing class. In Yeovil and its neighbourhood there is a manufacture of gloves. The cloth trade is nothing like so flourishing as it was in the seventeenth century, when it was almost entirely in the hands of Nonconformists and had few rivals. Cloth is still made at Wellington and other places, and London tailors will even now tell you that the best cloth comes from Somersetshire. Ilminster, an ancient place, whose Saturday's market dates from the Saxons, has a manufacture of web for carpets; Chard has lace factories, and Street is known for its mats. Shepton Mallet has considerable manufactures of silk, velvet, crape, and knitted stockings. The river Parrett, though devoid of beauty, deserves special mention; for owing to its peculiar deposit of clay and sand, the sediment is utilised in making what are called "Bath bricks," which are known all over the world. Tiles and pottery are also made at Bridgwater and at Highbridge; and close by are the works of the Dunball Company for the manufacture of Portland and Roman cement.

Exmoor produces a breed of ponies that are remarkable for strength and longevity. The small mutton of this district is also much esteemed.

At Blue Anchor, near Watchet, the shore is very picturesque, and has supplied E. W. Cooke and other artists with some charming subjects for the pencil. The rocks which skirt the shore are full of curious caverns; some have quite a fanciful appearance from the curved and contorted strata of beautifully-tinted alabaster, varying from the purest white to cornelian red. The substance is used largely for cement, and is being introduced into ornamental articles, such as chandeliers, vases, &c.

The timber of the county must not be passed over in silence. The oaks of Nettlecombe—Sir Walter Trevelyan's place—used to be greatly esteemed by ship-builders; and at the late Lord Taunton's property at Over Stowey there are some singularly fine trees. As high up as Broomfield or the Quantocks the trees are of great size. The late Mr. Andrew Crosse mentioned that on one occasion a great storm blew down a beech tree in his grounds "that exceeded 100 feet in height and contained nine tons of timber."

There is a custom, which probably has its origin in the remote past—a custom which has been kept up in West Somerset—of burning the ashen faggot on Christmas and New Year's Eve. The wood is cut fresh from the tree, and the faggot is bound with three withey-bands. The young people generally select one of these when the faggot is thrown on the fire; and if it is the first to burst they have their wish. The ash is still held in a sort of reverence by the country people; it is generally found to be the tree selected for the middle of the village green, and there is an idea that it cannot be struck by lightning, which all tends to show the permanence of the notion respecting the myth of the Yggdrasil, or Ash tree of the World, which is so curiously interwoven with mediæval traditions.

The nineteenth century has seen a like mad infatuation among the followers of Mr. Prince, the founder of the "Agapemone," or Abode of Love—a Mormon kind of settlement, on a spur of the Quantocks, near Bridgwater. Happily the scandal has at present almost passed out of public notice, and the funds of the establishment are visibly diminished.

Thomas Young, who was born in 1773, at Milverton, a village near the Brendon Hills, was the first of several scientific names associated about the close of the century with Somersetshire. Dr. Young has, perhaps, never been duly appreciated in his own country; but it must not be forgotten that he received from the French the high honour of being elected one of the eight Foreign Corresponding Members of the Institute.

Looking from Cothelstone-lodge, the Somersetshire views are extensive. It is possible to make out thirteen counties on a clear day. And out of the past you may recall this as the scene of many a gay pageant of mediæval hunting days, when the red deer of Exmoor and Quantock were roused by hound and horn. Cardinal Beaufort had a hunting-seat at Halshay, in the vale below; and at Milverton Wolsey was pleased to build a house for himself.

But we are speaking of later times—of the days of the first French Revolution, when Thelwall and Coleridge were once pursuing a lonely path across the hills. The story goes that Thelwall, enchanted with the wild solitude, exclaimed, "Citizen Samuel, this is the very place to talk treason in." "Nay, Citizen John, it is a place to make one forget the necessity for treason," returned the poet, with a true feeling for nature.

Another local anecdote gives us a glimpse of the times. News came slowly in those days, and it was the custom of travellers to stop at the houses of their friends *en route* to communicate the "latest intelligence." A young relative of Mr. Poole's, who was returning on horseback from college, stopped at Nether Stowey, and entering the dining-room he found Southey and Coleridge seated at table with their host. "I bring you great news," cried young John Poole, "Robespierre is dead!" Whereupon Southey put his head between his hands, exclaiming, "Good —, I would rather have heard of the death of my own father!"

De Quincey sought an interview with Coleridge during the time that he was located in the little cottage at "beloved Stowey." It was here that the former made the acquaintance of Mr. Tom Poole; and he speaks of him as "a man on his own account, well deserving separate notice." He says, "he was the general arbiter of the disputes of his fellow countrymen, the guide, the counsellor of their difficulties, besides being appointed executor and guardian to his children by every third man who died in or about the town of Nether Stowey."

When Southey was Mr. Poole's guest, as he frequently was, his host objected to his dangerous habit of reading in bed at night. This irritated the poet a good deal, and made him exclaim one day, "The worst of Poole is, he is not satisfied to be your friend, but he must be your saviour."

During the period that Coleridge spent his Sundays in walking, in his blue coat and brass buttons, over the Quantocks, to preach at the Unitarian chapel at Taunton, Wordsworth had also become a near neighbour. He and his sister rented Alfoxton, a place about three miles from Stowey. His early poems are full of allusions to the picturesque scenery of this spot and to the simple life of

the country people. The influences of the Quantocks are still more marked in Coleridge's poetry. In the lines written during an alarm of invasion he thus describes the scenery where sometimes his lot was cast:—

"The hills are healthy, save that swelling slope,  
Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,  
All golden with the never-bloomless furze,  
Which now blooms most profusely.

Oh! 'tis a quiet, spirit-healing nook."

In a note to the *Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge says, "It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with Wordsworth and his sister, in the autumn of 1797, that this poem was planned and, in fact, composed." "Our funds were very low," said Wordsworth, "and we resolved to write a poem for *The New Monthly* to help pay our expenses." The idea was founded upon a dream; but the details were worked out between them, Wordsworth suggesting that the Ancient Mariner should commit some crime which should cause him to be pursued by spectral persecution. The poets at first had modestly limited their hopes to remuneration of five pounds; but the poem grew so much in length and importance that they began to think of it as the nucleus of a volume. Recalling these happy youthful days, Wordsworth says—

"Beloved friend!  
When looking back, thou seest, in clearer view  
Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,  
That summer, under whose indulgent skies,  
Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved  
Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combes."

The walking tourist cannot do better than follow in the steps of the poets, if he desires a few days' freedom from the beaten track, amidst delightful scenery and many interesting associations. He will pass Watchet, Minehead and Porlock. At the latter place Coleridge, when in a profound sleep, composed some two or three hundred lines. When he awoke he wrote out about two pages of this dream poem, the descriptive parts of which are a perfect picture of this lovely country. Close to Porlock is the romantic little church of Culbone, and four miles due North stands Dunkerry Beacon, the highest point, with one exception, in the West of England. The neighbourhood is well known to the lovers of sport; the fishing is excellent; and, above all, it is famed for the stag-hunting, being amongst the few places where red deer are still to be found.

Many years later Southey was walking over the Quantock-hills, where he met his friend Andrew Crosse—"Philosopher Crosse," as he was called, of Broomfield. The latter told him that in the course of some experiments which he was making on electro-crystallisation he had met with insect life under very extraordinary conditions. This was the first announcement of the so-called

*Acari Crossei*, whose appearance brought down upon the experimenter such a torrent of abuse. Southey exclaimed at the time, "Never was a traveller stopped by so extraordinary an announcement." Mr. Crosse was much misrepresented both in scientific and other circles; but his own words were, "As to the appearance of the Acari under long-continued electrical action, I have never in thought, word, or deed, given any one a right to suppose that I considered them as a creation, or even a formation, from inorganic matter. I have never formed any theory sufficient to account for their appearance. . . It was a matter of chance. I was looking for silicious formations."

When a very young man Andrew Crosse's interest in natural phenomena had been excited by examining a curious and extensive fissure in the transition limestone rock about a mile from his ancestral home on the Quantocks. The roof and sides of this cave are covered with beautiful crystals of arragonite, a mineral very rarely found in England. His close observations on this interesting cavern led him to ponder on the probable laws of crystallisation; and by a course of patient experiment he was enabled to imitate the operation of nature in the formation of various crystals through electric agency. These and other investigations have associated his name with the science of electricity. For many years the grounds of the old mansion of Fyne Court, in the parish of Broomfield, were surrounded by an extensive arrangement of atmospheric exploring wires, with which numerous interesting observations on thunder-clouds, fogs, and other conditions of the weather, were made by the electrician. Mr. Kinglake, the author of the *History of the Crimean War*, is another distinguished Somersetshire man. In his book of Eastern travel, *Æthien*, he mentions a curious delusion that affected him when crossing the desert. He thought he heard the church bells of his native town ringing out their usual Sabbath peal amidst the utter silence of that vast solitude. Soon after he had an attack of the plague, and possibly some unconscious cerebral action produced this effect of the "ringing out of the sweet bells of Marlin tower." Mr. Kinglake sat as Member of Parliament for Bridgwater for twelve years, but the town does not at present return representatives.

Somersetshire is remarkable for the variety of its scenery. A very short space of time would suffice to transport the tourist from the turf moor and all that level land to the top of the Blagdon-hills, from whence he can obtain the best idea of

"Taunton's fruitful Deane, not matched by any ground," as Drayton says. Further to the Westward, on Dunkerry Beacon, he may stand on the highest point but one in

the West of England. Formerly beacon fires were kindled here which could be seen from the heights above Plymouth to the Malvern-hills in Worcestershire.

It will now be desirable to add a few remarks on the geological character of the rocks which underlie this varied landscape. Commencing with the Devonian rocks of the Palæozoic series, we find that the Quantock and Brendon-hills and the sterile waste of Exmoor are examples of this formation. The disturbed character of these rocks in West Somerset is remarkable: the forces to which they have been subjected have been sufficient to contort them so that not a single bed now occupies the same position in which it was first formed. The minerals which have been found on the Quantocks are sulphate of barytes, arragonite, many varieties of the carbonates of lime, carbonate, sulphuret, and peroxide of iron. There is also yellow sulphuret of copper, and blue and green carbonate of copper. Veins of what miners call "gossan" are frequent. There is a saying among the Cornish people, that "Gossan rides a good horse." Attempts have been made, but very inadequately, to develop the mineral treasures of the Quantocks. Some years ago a Cornish inspector, speaking to the late Mr. Crosse, of Broomfield, said it was his opinion that some day the Quantock range would become one of the principal mining districts in the West of England. At the present time the Ebbw Vale Company is successfully working that particular kind of ore known as the white carbonate of iron, and used for the manufacture of the best steel. Hematite iron ore is frequent in this district.

The prevailing rock of the Mendip range, which extends from Frome to the Bristol Channel, is carboniferous or mountain limestone, resting on the old red sandstone, which rises from underneath the limestone in the highest parts of the district. The limestone at Cannington Park, lying North of the Quantocks, was long a vexed question with geologists; it is now decided to be a member of the carboniferous series.

New red sandstone comes next in order, outlying the coal measures. Somerset presents an extensive and varied series of these deposits. The vale between the Quantocks and the Brendons, extending to the sea, is an example. The lower beds are principally of new red sandstone, above which a conglomerate occurs, consisting of a magnesio-calcareous cement.

The mass of this series from Williton to Minehead is principally arenaceous or marly. If a line be drawn from Wiveliscombe to Orchard Portman, across the country commonly known as the Vale of Taunton, we shall obtain a fair section of the red sandstone series of this district. "Its general thickness," said Sir Henry de la Bèche,

"would probably not exceed a few hundred feet." The conglomerate is extensively worked for the lime in the cementing matter. The limestone in these beds is much worn by abrasion, and contains such fossils and bears such characteristics as may lead geologists to look to the space between the Mendip Hills and the Holms as the localities from which these water-worn pieces of carboniferous limestone rock were derived.

Superincumbent lias, conformable to the new red sandstone, may be observed on the coast from Blue Anchor to Watchet. A considerable quantity of gypsum (commonly called alabaster) occurs in this district, and, as before-mentioned, is now extensively used. The strata of the beach between Watchet and Blue Anchor are so much contorted that they have been compared to the great waves of the sea suddenly consolidated. At low water spring tides the fossil remains of a submerged forest may be seen at Minehead. Within the memory of man the sea has gained considerably on this coast.

The lias of Somersetshire is richer in organic remains than even the well-known formation of the same kind at Lyme Regis. At Watchet nearly perfect skeletons of ichthyosauri and plesiosauri have been found; also the bones of a huge platiodon and the similar remains of a pterodactyle. In the central part of Somerset the lias is of extensive occurrence, and the neighbourhood of Street, near Glastonbury, has supplied some of the finest specimens of saurians possessed by the British Museum.

We have now enlarged data for the entomology of a former world. In the same bed with fishes and saurians are impressions of thousands of insects: the gaudy dragon-fly and the ephemera abound. It is a curious fact that the railway-cuttings in this county, and in other parts of England, have caused a great increase of insects, especially among some of the rarer kinds of butterflies. This observation was made to the writer by a naturalist who had been a collector all his life.

Pentacrinites, echini, ammonites, nautili, abound in the Watchet lias; and on the beach are multitudes of compressed ammonites, still retaining the beautiful iridescent nacre.

The Blagdon Hills, skirting the county South of Taunton, are of green sand, capping the lias, and occasionally surmounted by chalk. The neighbourhood of chert, gravel and flint are always to be traced by the excellence of the roads. The rich alluvial deposits which cover so large an area form most valuable grazing land.

Such a long series of geological formations as are here described are of rare occurrence in a single county, and render Somersetshire a peculiarly interesting district to the scientific observer.



The article in the *London Quarterly Review* on Somersetshire, from which we have quoted, is stated by the literary correspondent of the *Exchange and Mart* (a London paper) to be from the pen of Mrs. Andrew Cross; but we have no authority beyond that mentioned, as no name appears.

A neat and useful little book on the Geography of Somersetshire has lately appeared, edited by Mr. William Hughes, F.R.C.S.; and from it we make the following extracts, which we believe will interest our readers:—

Somerset is one of the South-western counties of England. It is a maritime county, bordering upon the Bristol Channel; its inland frontier adjoins the counties of Gloucester, Wilts, Dorset and Devon. It ranks ninth among the English counties in point of size. The counties superior to Somerset in this regard are York, Lincoln, Devon, Norfolk, Northumberland, Lancaster, Hants and Essex. Yorkshire, the largest of the English counties, is between three and four times larger than Somerset; Rutland, the smallest, is hardly more than one-eleventh of its size.

Somerset has an area of 1,047,220 acres, or 1636 square miles. This is rather less than a thirtieth part of the entire area of England, and about a fiftieth part of the whole island of Great Britain. It includes a diversity of surface which is scarcely surpassed by any portion of South Britain; and from the circumstances of its position and aspect its physical geography possesses a completeness and unity of character such as belong to hardly any other part of the British Islands.

Few of the English counties have, upon the whole, so great a variety of surface—ranging from elevations of above 1,700 feet downwards. The low grounds in the neighbourhood of Bridgwater Bay, and chiefly within the valleys of the rivers Brue and Axe,\* as well as portions of those within the valley of the Parret, were formerly mere marshes, unfit for human habitation—in parts but little raised above the level of the sea, and only rendered capable of cultivation by means of artificial drainage. The extensive area of the Brent Marshes, between the lower portions of the Brue and the Axe, is so uniformly level as to require artificial channels to provide sufficient outfall for the waters. This is also the case with other portions of the low grounds, within the Brue and the Parret

\* There are two rivers of this name. The one here referred to, which is wholly within Somerset, enters Bridgwater Bay. The other and more important river, Axe, passes from the Southern border of Somerset into the adjoining counties of Dorset and Devon. There are also two rivers Yeo, the one flowing into the Bristol Channel, the other (which passes the town of Yeovil) an affluent of the Parret.

valleys. The lower portion of the river Yeo (Bristol Channel), again, lies within a tract which requires to be protected from the sea by an artificial embankment, and parts of which are several feet below the level of high-water at spring-tides.

A large portion of Somersetshire consists of uplands, which in parts (and especially within its South-westerly division) rise into hills of considerable altitude. Its North-eastward portion, though nowhere reaching so great a height as the opposite extremity of the county, is generally diversified, and has, on the whole, a moderately-elevated surface. The middle division of the county—i.e., the portion included between the Mendip Hills on the North-east and the Quantock and Blackdown ranges in the West and South-west—is generally low.

The most considerable extent of high ground is found in the extreme West, and includes part of the tract known as Exmoor, which extends into the adjacent county of Devon. Dunkery Beacon, the highest point of Exmoor (lat. 51° 10', long. 3° 35'), and 1,787 feet in height, is in Somerset. Lucott Hill, 1,512 feet, is about three miles W. by N. of Dunkery. Span Head, 1,618 feet, is on the Somerset and Devon border, near the extreme West of the county, and not far from the source of the river Barle.

The high ground of Exmoor, after enclosing the valley of the upper Exe, sinks gradually to the Eastward, in the direction of the upper Tone and its affluent streams. Brendon Hill, its most Eastward prolongation, reaches 1,290 feet. Haddon Down, between two and three miles East of Dulverton (and divided from the Brendon ridge by a slight depression), is 1,166 feet. Farther to the South-east are the Blackdown Hills, which border the Vale of Taunton on the South and form the most conspicuous portion of the high tract which here marks the Somerset and Devon border, constituting the dividing-ridge, or watershed, between the Bristol and the English Channels. The highest point of Blackdown (directly South of the town of Wellington) reaches 900 feet above the sea.

The Quantock Hills are within the Western division of the county, and at their Northernmost extremity make a near approach to the waters of the Bristol Channel. They extend in the direction of North-west and South-east, and are divided from the outlying high grounds of the Exmoor district by a well-marked depression, through which the line of railway connecting the town of Watchet with the Bristol and Exeter line (near Taunton) has been carried. The highest point of the Quantock Hills (Will's Neck, near the village of West Bagborough) reaches 1,262 feet. The Quantock Hills subside to the

Southward into the fertile Vale of Taunton. To the East they sink into the extensive tract of low ground which forms the valley of the river Parret through great part of its course, and within which the lower portion of the Tone (immediately above its junction with the Parret) is included. This lowland tract includes, in a general sense, the great central area lying between the Quantock and the Mendip Hills, and reaching inland from the shores of Bridgwater Bay to the South-eastern border-line of the county—that is, more than half its entire extent. The slight elevations of Polden Hill and a few adjacent tracts form but a partial interruption of the generally level nature of this area.

**RIVERS.**—By much the larger portion of Somerset—above nine-tenths of its entire area—belongs to the drainage-basin of the Bristol Channel, towards which the slope of the land, as a whole, is directed. Its principal rivers are—the Parret (with its affluent, the Tone), Avon, Brue, and Exe, all but the last-named of which discharge into the Bristol Channel. The Exe, only the upper portion of which is within Somersetshire, and which belongs chiefly to the adjacent county of Devon, has its outlet in the English Channel.

The united areas of these five river-basins is thus—

Parret (including Tone, &c.)	..	600 sq. m.
Avon (Somersetshire portion)	..	300 „
Brue .. .. .	..	200 „
Exe (Somersetshire portion)	..	120 „
Exe (of Bristol Channel)	..	70 „
Total	..	1,290

The Parret ranks first amongst the rivers of Somerset, from the large area of its basin, as well as from the fact that nearly its entire course is within the county. Its most distant head-waters are within the chalk downs of Dorsetshire, a short distance beyond the Somersetshire border; thence it crosses the county in a North-westerly direction, discharging into Bridgwater Bay, after a course of about 40 miles in length. On its right bank the Parret receives the streams of the Yeo or Ivel, and the Carey; on its left, the Isle and the Tone. Of these affluents, the Tone, which waters the fertile Vale of Taunton, is the most considerable. The Parret is navigable for vessels of 200 tons up to the town of Bridgwater, and for small craft to a short distance above Langport. The navigation of the Tone reaches up to Taunton; that of the Yeo to Ilchester.

The river Exe has its origin on the high ground of Exmoor, within the Westernmost portion of the county, and passes thence into Devonshire, to which it chiefly belongs. It receives on its left bank the river Barle, the whole

course of which is within Somerset. The Barle joins the Exe immediately above the point at which the latter leaves the county, at Exe Bridge, between two and three miles below the town of Dulverton.

A small portion of Somersetshire, in the South and South-east, falls within the basins of the Devonshire Exe and the Stour—both of which, like the Axe, discharge into the English Channel. The town of Chard, near the South-west border of the county, lies on the line of water-parting between the basins of the Parret and the Axe.

The geology of Somersetshire is equally varied as its superficial aspect. The low grounds and river-valleys in general, where not composed of fen or marsh land, belong to the new red sandstone formation. This is overlaid, in the case of the numerous elevated grounds found within the Eastern and South-eastern divisions of the county, by various strata of the lias and inferior oolite, both of which are extensively used for building purposes. The Quantock Hills, with the rugged tract of Exmoor, belong to the mixture of slaty limestones and coarse gritstone, known to geologists as the Devonian series, which is spread over a large area of the adjacent county of Devon. Slate is quarried in one part of this tract, in the neighbourhood of Wiveliscombe. The more Western portion of the slate area, however, is divided from the Quantock range by an intervening tract of new red sandstone.

The county of Somerset had in 1871 a total population of 463,412—equivalent to an average of 283 persons to a square mile.\* In 1861, the total population was 444,873; so that the absolute increase within the ten years was 18,539 persons—a ratio of above 4 per cent.† Of the total of 463,412, the number of males was 218,026; of females, 245,386.

The industry of Somerset is chiefly agricultural. The soil has in general a high degree of fertility. The Vale of Taunton is a richly-cultivated tract, one of the most

\* This is considerably below the average population of England as a whole, which at the same date had a total of 21,487,688 inhabitants—equivalent to 492 persons to the square mile. Wales at the same date contained a population of 1,218,490—an average of 164 persons to a square mile. England and Wales unitedly had a population of 22,704,108—an average of 889 to the square mile.

† The increase in the population of Somerset during the ten years comprised between 1861 and 1871 is greater, both absolutely and relatively, than in any other of the counties included within the South-western division of England. The county of Wilts shows during the same interval an absolute increase of 7,891, or 3 per cent.; Dorset, 6,756, or about  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent.; Devon, 16,441, which is below 3 per cent. Cornwall exhibits a positive decrease of 7,292 in the number of inhabitants in 1871 as compared with 1861.

productive in England, and yields crops of the finest wheat. Within the low grounds, however, the greater part of the land is in pasture, and the husbandry of the county, as a whole, is rather grazing than arable. Excellent butter and cheese are made.

There is not much of manufacturing industry in Somersetshire. Silk goods are made to a limited extent at Taunton, which town formerly had considerable industry in the making of woollen goods—now entirely decayed. The woollen manufacture was in former times extensively dispersed through the middle and Eastern divisions of the county, and there are still some remains of it at Frome, Ilminster, Chard and a few other places. Yeovil is the centre of a considerable kid-glove manufacture.

The London and South-Western extension line, by way of Salisbury, to Exeter, traverses a portion of the county, adjacent to (and following nearly the course of) part of its Southern boundary-line, passing by (or near) the towns of Milborne Port, Yeovil and Crewkerne. A branch line of the Bristol and Exeter Railway also extends to Yeovil (by way of Langport), and effects a junction between the Great Western and the South-Western systems. Another connection between them is effected by a line which runs from the latter, by way of Chard and Ilminster, to Taunton. The main line of the Wilts and Somerset Railway crosses the county, passing (from Trowbridge and Westbury, in the adjacent county of Wilts) by way of Frome, Bruton and Castle Cary, to Yeovil, whence it extends Southward into Dorsetshire. These and various branch lines traverse Somersetshire in various directions, and connect all its more considerable towns. The West Somerset Mineral Railway, of recent construction, runs inland from the maritime town of Watchet to the Brendon Hills.

The sessional divisions in West Somerset:—Dunster, Dulverton, Williton, Wiveliscombe, Bishop's Lydeard, Wellington, Taunton, Bridgwater and Ilminster. For the purpose of Parliamentary representation the county is divided into three portions—known respectively as East, Mid and West Somerset, each of them returning two members to the House of Commons. The city of Bath and the borough of Taunton each return two members. The city of Wells and the borough of Frome return one member each. The total representation of Somerset in the Lower House of Parliament consists therefore of 12 members—six of them representatives of the county, and six sitting for the cities and boroughs. The total number of parishes is 488. Taunton is the county town.

Taunton, the principal town within the South-western division of the county, lies on the banks of the river Tone, in the centre of the fertile vale known by its name, be-

tween eight and nine miles W.S.W. of Bridgwater, 12 miles W. by S. of Langport, and 40 miles S.W. of Bath. Taunton is a great centre of local trade, and is of frequent mention in history, in connection with the Civil War, when it was successfully defended against the Royalists by Blake, in 1645, and also in relation to the abortive insurrection under the Duke of Monmouth. This part of the county abounds in localities of historic note. The tract within which the Tone joins the Parret midway between Langport and Bridgwater, was the former Athelney \*—(the Isle of Nobles)—the temporary retreat of Alfred, in 878, when it was insulated by the over-abundant waters of a district naturally marshy, but afterwards reclaimed by drainage.

Wellington, six miles S.W. of Taunton, is also within the valley of the Tone, near its right bank, and not far from the foot of the Blackdown Hills. Milverton, between six and seven miles W. by N. of Taunton, and Wiveliscombe, nine miles distant (in the same direction), are also within the Tone basin. Ilminster, ten miles E.S.E. of Taunton, is near the river Isle, an affluent of the Parret. Chard, which lies between four and five miles S. by W. of Ilminster, is on the dividing ridge between the basins of the Parret and the Devonshire Axe, as also is Crewkerne, situated about midway between Chard and Yeovil (eight miles W.S.W. of the latter.)

Dulverton, within the Westerly or Exmoor division of the county (19 miles W. by N. of Taunton) is on the left bank of the river Barle, a short distance above its confluence with the Exe.

The town of Watchet is situated on that portion of the coast line which extends to the Westward of Bridgwater Bay, and which lies in the general direction of East and West, 15 miles N.W. of Taunton (with which it is connected by a branch line of railway, running through a valley which divides the Quantock Hills from the high grounds of the Exmoor region). Farther to the West are Dunster, Minehead and Porlock, attractive marine villages, the last-named near the shore of Porlock Bay.

The greater part—perhaps the whole, or nearly the whole—of Somersetshire is within the territory of the Belgæ, one of the British nations enumerated by Ptolemy.† Two of the three cities which he names as belonging to the Belgæ are within the county of Somerset—viz., Ischalas (Ilchester), and Hot Springs (Bath).‡

\* There is now a railway station called by that name.

† The geographer of Alexandria, who wrote in the second century of the Christian era.

‡ The third is Venta (Winchester), within the neighbouring county of Hants.

In the provincial division of Roman Britain Somerset fell within Britannia Prima, under which name the whole area lying South of the Thames and the Bristol Channel is believed to have been included.

In the earlier Saxon period Somerset fell within the kingdom of the West Saxons—i.e., Wessex, of which Winchester was the capital. It long formed the Western limit to which Saxon conquest reached, and was the repeated scene of border warfare between the Saxon invaders and the British nations which maintained their position in the South-western corner of the island.

The following localities demand special note on account of their historic interest:—

Athelney—the retreat of Alfred, at or about the junction of rivers Parret and Tone.

Langport—site of a battle during the Civil War (1645).

Sedgemoor—battle during Monmouth's rebellion (1685).

Taunton—defence under Blake during Civil War (1645).



### The Somersetshire Dialect.

The following amusing account of a family affliction was given by an old nurse, formerly residing at Pitminster. It was repeated to the late Dr. Standert, of Taunton, who prepared it for *Blackwood's Magazine*; but in consequence of some misunderstanding it never appeared in that publication, and is now for the first time seen in print. It was written by a lady who was visiting him. It gives no bad idea of the habits and dialect of the rural peasantry of the West.

A gentleman, who had not seen his nurse for some years, happening to be in the village where she lived, called on her, when the following dialogue ensued:—

"Lor a massy, sur, is it you? Well, sure, I be cruel glad ta see ye. How's mistus?—and the yong laadess?—and maistur?"

"All well, nurse, and desire to be kindly remembered to you. You are quite stout, I am glad to see; but how is your husband?"

"My husband! Oh, mayhap, sur, you han't a heard the news?"

"The news! No. I hope he is not dead."

"Oh, no, sur; but he's dark!"

"Dark! What—blind? How did that happen?"

"Why, there now, sur; I'll tell ee all about it. One marning—'tis sa long ago as last apple-picking—I wur a getting up, and I waked Jan, and I twoald un 'twere

time vor he ta be upping too. Zo a muttered somat, and snoozed round agin. Zo arter a beet I spoked to un agin. 'Jan,' says I, 'what be a snoozing there vor? Git up.' Zo says he, 'What's the use a gitting up bevore 'tis light?' 'Oh,' says I, 'tiddent light, is it? Thee'st know what's behind the dooar. I'll soon tell thee where 'tis light or no, ya laxy veller.' 'Why,' says he, turning his haid, 'tis so dark as pitch.' Now that did pervoke me. I'll tell your honour the truth—I war angry wee un. Zo I vatched the stick, and beganned to wallop un a bit; but—lor a massy, God vurgin me—in a minnit the blid gushed ta me heart and gid me zitch a turn that I wur vit ta drap; vur, instead a putting up his arms ta keep off the stick, as a used ta do, there hin wus, drowing em all abroad; and a said, 'Dooant ee, dooant ee. I can't see. If 'tis light, I be dark!' 'Oh,' says I, 'my deear old man, you baints ta be sure.' 'Ees,' says he, 'I be, sure enough.' Well, I war a gushed. Zo I pat down stick, and looked ta his eyes. Bit I coodn't see nort in em. Zo says I, 'There's nort in your eyes, Jan. You'll be better bym bye.' Zo I got en up and dressed en, and toekt en ta the winder. 'There,' says I, 'can't ee see now?' Bit no, a said a couldn't. 'Then,' says I, 'I know what 'tis. Zights a turned innards.' Zo I toekt a pair a zissers—not sharp-tapped ones, yer honour, blint-tapped ones—and poked at his eyes to turn the sight outard agin. Well, then I brought en down stairs into this room, yer honour. Zo, says I, 'Jan, cantee see in this room, nother?' And a said, No, a couldn't. Well, then I thought a the pectur, yer honour. He wur always cruel fond a pectura. Thinks I, praps a mid see they. Zo I toekt en up ta thio one. 'Here,' says I, 'Jan, dontee see thio pectur?' 'Tis Taffy a riding pon his goocat.' But a sed 'No, a couldn't.' Zo then I toekt en up ta thio pectur, there, sur. He wur always very fond a thio; and I pushed his noocase close to en. 'There,' says I, 'ta be sure you can see thio pectur, cant-ee?' But a sed, No, a couldn't. 'Why, says I, 'tis Josep, and his brethren. There they be: there be twelve o' em. Cant-ee see narry one o' em?' Bit a sed, No, a couldn't see narry one. 'Then, says I, 'Tis a bad job. Yer zights a turned innards.' Zo we pomstered way en a bit, and then we tried some doctor's trade, but didn't do en no good; and ta last we wus told there was a wise man down to Exter—one Dr. Barnes. Zo we sent down ta he. The Exter doctor seed en, and toekt his box a tools and zarched about his eyes a bit; and then a sent en home with this word, that he couldn't do en no good, and nobody else couldn't do en no good nother, vor he'd a got a Gustavus in em. Zo he's dark, ever since yer honour. But he's very well in health. Good marning, yer honour, and Ged bless ee."

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## Somerset Scenery.

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QUANTOCK, as I gaze on thee  
Bounds my heart with extacy!  
Now the darkling shadows sleep,  
Now the sparkling sunbeams leap,  
Now thy slopes resplendent gleam,  
Now thy vallies slumbering seem,  
Now so near 'neath clouds on high,  
Now so far 'neath azure sky.  
Burnham's lighthouse in the plain  
Rises silvery from the main,  
Backed by Aisholt's heathery glen,  
Crowned by Bagborough's heights again.  
Roams my fancy, while I stand,  
Through thy groves, dear Quantock land—  
Where the brooks glide murmuring on,  
Twinkling in the noontide sun;  
Where the aromatic air  
Charms away fatigue and care;  
Where the landscape's rich supply  
Gorgeous canvass for the eye:  
Where sweet Nature tints hath twined,  
Purple, golden, green combined.


*Stephenson.*

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## Farewell.

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OOD-BYE, fair Burnham, Berrow, Brean,  
With lighthouse, shore, and Down;  
Good-bye, ye islets, grey or green,  
As ye or smile or frown.  
Good-bye, dear Quantock, bold and blue,  
And Dunkery, 'neath the sky,  
With Brendon, Croydon, Grabhurst, too,  
Porlock, and Greenaleigh.  
And last, not least, my cherished home,  
My old grey tower, good-bye,  
Where'er through this wide earth I roam,  
Thou shalt not leave mine eye!  
For memory's glance, so keen and clear,  
Shall fondly turn to thee;  
To childhood, youth, and manhood dear,  
In sorrow and in glee.

*Stephenson.*

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## The Valley of the Tone.

[The following lines, extracted from a poem written by Mr. T. P. Bell when on a visit to this neighbourhood in 1865, will probably be new and interesting to most of our readers. They will be found in a volume named "Wild Flowers of the Soul." The writer called on the author of "West Somerset," &c., and accompanied him in a drive on the beautiful surrounding hills. It was during the time of the enjoyment of the lovely scenery that the lines were suggested and composed. The volume contains much that is poetical and interesting, both locally and otherwise.]

## To Taunton and the Vale of Taunton Meane.



Noble Vale, outstretching far the sight—  
On greenly growing breast of emerald rich,  
I pensive wander, thinking but of thee,  
And of thy many miles of beauty rare ;  
Unmatch'd by aught in distant lands, or in  
The daisied glades of our dear island-home !  
Ay, then, O Vale ! I've trod thy flowery fields,

(Where dark-green elms their branches proudly spread,  
And fling soft shade upon the gentle kine,  
That wander gladsome by the flowing Tone,  
And by thy myriad silver streams, that glide  
Like argent spirits o'er thy velvet breast,)  
And watch'd great Phoebus deck thy villas sweet ;  
Thy sacred fanes, that towering seek the sky ;  
Thy college-schools, where wisdom loves to dwell ;  
Thy goodly farmsteads, with steep reeded roofs ;  
Thy white-faced cots, that dot thy broad expanse ;

Thy noble hills, whose green brows grandly face  
The vaulted azure with its fleecy clouds !

Yes, then I've walk'd delighted, till I've reach'd  
Many a green summit, where the leafy trees  
Shield the glad heart, 'neath shadows soft and deep,  
From the full blaze of sunbeams pouring down,  
As 'twere a flood of golden glory pure,  
Upon thy fair and ever-fruitful meads,  
Which make thy verdant heart, so like blest Eden's, rich !

And here fully many a crown'd head hath sought  
A safe retreat from fell, invading foe,  
As in a paradise of blissful love,  
Whose perfumed air for ever floateth free,  
To charm the heart with balmy spells of joy !

And oft, methinks, our own Great Alfred's feet  
Have lightsome tripp'd along thy glens of green,  
And caroll'd sweetly with his kingly voice ;

And touch'd, with skilful hand, his sweet-toned harp,  
Until its soul-inspiring echoes flew  
From cot to cot within thy circling hills !

Fled are those royal days, as sun-rays bright ;  
And still'd the graceful hand of him who play'd—  
With rarest touch—his harp of gleaming gold,  
Adown the banks of thy free-flowing Tone,  
Whereon he loved with cowl'd monk to speak  
Of Wisdom's lore—which he so well did know ;  
Or with a beggar, shoeless, seeking food  
From generous hand of some pure, high-born son ;  
Or with a cowherd, watching the fair kine  
That gently low'd beside some lucid stream ;  
Or with a widow, weeping o'er her child,  
Reft of its father's broad, protective hand ;  
Or with some soldier leal, and brave, and true,  
Of onset bold upon the daring Dane.

Now, wending slow my way adown the height,  
Thy cheerful chimes steal on my listening ear  
From out Saint Mary's fine, ornated Tower,  
In cadence richly toned, and soft, and sweet,  
Like argent voice of happy-hearted maid,  
Singing her vespers to her Father kind !  
And, as I leave this green and pleasant mount,  
Mine eye, enraptured deep, doth gladsome ken  
Thy many miles of mystic loveliness,  
That, spreading far in circling, fairy pride,  
Fly ever on the loudly-throbbing heart—  
A pleasing spell of beauty pure and true.  
Thy garden-grounds well kept with flowerets fair,  
Whose balmy breathings bless the very soul,  
As they were cherubs from the land of love ;  
Thy busy mills, all proudly rising high,  
Where youth and age toil hard for honest bread ;  
Thy handsome hall, built well, of grayish stone,  
Where Law and Justice are, to rich and poor,  
Wisely administer'd by judges sage ;  
Thy useful home for those who need the care  
Of wise physicians of the healing art ;  
Thy rich museum, stored with treasures rare

Of men and ages slumbering in the dust ;  
Yon spacious building gray, high wall'd around,  
Wherein full many a vestal heart doth beat,  
Yet sigh for love and sweet society,  
As white-cheek'd roses do for sunny hours ;  
Thy many temples neat, though towerless, where  
God's precious Gospel is proclaim'd with joy,  
By wisdom-breathing lips and generous hearts ;  
Thy holy fanes, with grandeur towering high,  
Through the wide sea of fragrant, purple air,  
And wandering waves.

To thy castled town  
(Than which there be but very few, methinks,  
That well can vie with her in finer fanes,  
In learning, beauty, and in cleanly streets)  
My heart, enchanted, gaily moveth on  
O'er meadows path'd ; where Love hath told the fair  
His tale of pure, seraphic bliss in bowers  
Of wedded life ; the time they sat 'neath tree  
Outspreading far, or, smiling, saunter'd by  
The full, free stream that always glideth there,  
As youthful virgin through loved groves of green !  
Bearing, all peacefully, the snow-white swan  
Over her pearly way in grandeur calm.

Farewell, sweet Vale ! yet oft I'll visit thee,  
To ken thy beauty and thy towering hills !  
Yes, oft I'll come to view thee in thy pride,  
When blossoms blushful smile upon thy breast,  
Mantled in leaf-made habits green and gay,  
As they were angels from the golden groves !

Yes, then I'll visit thee, O Valley fair !  
When round thy circling hills the watchet winds  
Sing their sweet songs of holy love and life  
To music thrilling from the jewell'd harp  
Of some young nymph—wood-born and blue of eye !

Ay, then I'll gladly visit thee, O beauteous Vale !  
And oft, with merry heart and joyous step,  
Ascend proud Black-Down's heather-crown'd height,  
To gaze on thee—when Summer reigns supreme !

MAY, 1835.



## The Valley of the Tone.

**A** STRANGER visiting for the first time the beautiful county of Somerset must be struck with admiration when, on reaching the summit of the Quantock or Blackdown Hills, the noble Vale of Taunton Deane lies before him in all its glory. Probably the richness of its soil and the luxuriance of the trees and foliage may particularly please him, or it may be that the number and style of the numerous churches, mansions and villas, &c., may attract his especial notice; at all events, he is sure to observe the grandeur of the surrounding hills. We propose in the following lines to give some information of interest, not only to the resident, but we trust also to the visitor or stranger.

The valley of the Tone is bounded on the North by the glorious old Quantock Hills, on the South by the heathy Blackdowns, on the East by the river Parrett and the moors, and on the West by the Brendon Hills and the high lands around and about Wiveliscombe.

It includes the flourishing towns of Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe, and the ancient towns of North Curry, Milverton, Crowcombe and Norton, besides sixty surrounding villages.

It is about twenty miles in length from East to West, and from twelve to fifteen in width, being somewhat in the shape of a pear. The whole of its waters drain Eastwards towards the river Parrett, at Boroughbridge. It contains a great variety of soil. It is, and ever has been, noted for its fertility, and its mild and salubrious air. It is generally included in the two *unions* of Taunton and Wellington.

The praises of the noble vale of Taunton Deane have been sung by ancient and modern poets, and have been noted by Macaulay and many other eminent writers.

Numerous important historical events have taken place here, for it has held its own from the earliest times.

Monks of old knew and appreciated its fertility, and established themselves at various places, particularly at Taunton, Buckland and Cothay.

During the eventful middle ages it was a place of note for its trade in the woollen manufactures.

It is now principally noted as being one of the most beautiful and healthy valleys in England, and is the resort of many who, after a busy life abroad, seek to enjoy the happiness of a pleasant and health-giving residence at home.

The following parishes are included in the limits of the valley of the Tone:—Angersleigh, Ash Priors, Ashbrittle, Bishop's Hull, Broomfield, Bishop's Lydeard, Bagborough, Bradford, Brompton Ralph, Bathealton, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Creech St. Michael, Crowcombe, Cothelstone, Corfe, Coombe Florey, Clatworthy, Durston, Elworthy, Fitzhead, Heathfield, Hillfarence, Halse, Huish Champflower, Hatch Beauchamp, Kingston, Kittisford, Lyng, Lydeard St. Lawrence, Langford Budville, Milverton, North Curry, Nynhead, Norton Fitzwarren, Orchard Portman, Oak, Pitminster, Runnington, Ruishton, Raddington, Stoke St. Gregory, Stoke St. Mary, St. Michael Church, Stawley, Staplegrove, Sampford Arundell, Trull, Tolland, Thurlington, Thurlbear, Thorn Falcon, Thorn St. Margaret, Taunton St. Mary, Taunton St. James, West Hatch, Wilton, Wiveliscombe, Wellington, West Buckland, West Monkton.

A distinct account has been prepared of each parish, which will contain particulars of considerable interest and value to its residents.

A few years ago a talented gentleman (the Rev. W. A. Jones) prepared and read before the meeting of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society in this town a series of papers, entitled, 'Historical Pictures of Taunton and its Neighbourhood.' They contain much which cannot fail to prove of great interest to

all connected with this locality; and although at the time they were published in the Taunton papers, no copy has ever appeared in the Volume of the Society's *Proceedings*.

As we believe that they deserve more notice than they have received, we make from them the following copious extract:—

Before and about the time when the extensive gravel-beds lying principally on the North side of the river Tone were carried thither by immense floods, there evidently existed in this valley forms of animal life, which in the present are associated only with the tropical climes. Those of you who have closely examined the mixture of marl and flint and chert-pebbles with sand, which is sometimes brought to light in the excavations for draining, cannot fail to have observed that the deposit is not very deep, and that it embraces the washings, so to speak, of the Blagdon side of the valley. The flood to which this deposit is due carried along with it the *debris* of the green sand which caps the Blagdon Hills and crops out along its flanks, mingling with it the red-marl which is the natural soil of the plains. That flood did not rush over a barren waste. The vale was then, as now, rich in vegetable and in animal life. And although the animal forms belong to the types prevailing in tropical climates, yet the vegetation would not seem to have differed materially from that which prevails in the present day. The proof of this is supplied by the immense trunks of oak and alder, by the leaves and nuts of hazel, which were found in the excavations at the Taunton gaol in 1851. In a bed immediately overlying this were discovered the remains of the rhinoceros *tichorhinus*. They are evidently portions of the heads of two individuals of the species, one considerably older than the other, from which it may be presumed that they were not the solitary occupants of this district. At this time, all the main physical features of the district were exactly the same as now. The same river which now meanders smoothly between the Quantock and the Blagdon Hills, through meadows in which the elm and the hazel grow, flowed then in the same way through forests of oak and alder and hazel. Even the hazel-nuts, which might have grown on branches overhanging the stream in which this rhinoceros sported with its young in uncouth gambols—even these hazel-nuts have been preserved for us in the same deposit in which the remains of the animal itself was found. And although few of the bones of the elephant or the tiger, the lion, the bear or the hyana, have been found in this valley, yet the fact of successive generations and a variety of species

of all these animals having lived and died so near to this spot as the Mendip Hills, fully justifies our introducing them also into the scene which the picture of Taunton Deane of that period presents. Imagine, then, the cave-bones now deposited in cases in our Museum again associated and fitted together with the skeletons to which they originally belonged; imagine these bones again clothed with flesh and instinct with life, and the gigantic and now extinct races of animals again occupying the region in which they once lived! The beasts of prey basking in the sun, or lying in wait for the deer or the ox as they come to slake their thirst in ancient Tone, wandering over the hills by the light of stars, or returning to the thickets amidst the gloom of the woody hills at Hestercombe and Orchard Portman!—the herbivorous animals grazing on rich pastures beside the river bank, or tearing down the branches of the trees with which the primeval forests abounded! Do not be satisfied with picturing to yourselves even the massive proportions of animal life as it exists in tropical climes of the present day, for in that case you must altogether fail to realize the immense size of the elephants, the bears, and the tigers, whose haunts were on Mendip, and also doubtless in Taunton Deane as well. Judging from the size of the remains of the animals of that period which lived in and roamed over this district, the largest elephant known in recent times would be a dwarf by the side of its primeval ancestors. The same may be said of the bear tribe, and of the lions and the tigers. To complete the picture, we must not omit to refer to forms of life which draw closer in their resemblance to those now prevailing—as the wild boar, the wild horse, and the deer tribe, the antlers of one species of which must have branched out beyond anything illustrated by living forms in this country now; and, lastly, the little *marmot*, with other more perishable forms which have been swept away by the floods, or destroyed by the ravages of time. Such is the picture of Taunton Deane at this period of the world's history, which the treasures of our Museum, interpreted by the aid of geological science, reveal and enable us to realize! Did any of the human race exist here then? Did any human eye behold the living form of this rhinoceros or of any of its tribe? Did any bold hunter ever do battle with the tiger or the bear which once prowled over the now peaceful plains of Taunton Deane? Did any woman's tender heart ever shudder at the lion's roar or the howl of the hyana anywhere between Blagdon and Quantock? Was the noble stag, whose antlers were found in the site of the Taunton Gas Works, ever seen living by the eye of man—pursued

and slain that the lords of the creation might feast upon its venison? To these questions, at least as far as this immediate neighbourhood is concerned, the discoveries of the naturalist and the antiquarian give no answer. As yet there are no facts, that I know of, on which to base even a surmise. But in other parts of Europe, and in this country, and even in the adjoining county of Devon, Sir Charles Lyell, and Prestwich, and Dr. Falconer, and other distinguished geologists, believe they have found the undoubted indications of the contemporaneity of the human race with the animal forms which are now extinct in this country. That page in the world's history which scientific men have so recently discovered, and which they are now so eagerly striving to decipher, may yet be unfolded to us, within the limits of our neighbourhood. The deposit in which this rhinoceros was found may yet tell the tale, and supply the needed answer to the questions I have asked. Was man contemporaneous in Britain with the elephant, the rhinoceros, the lion, the tiger, and the hyena? The answer given to this question by those who have closely examined the subject is undoubtedly Yes! because in the same deposit with the remains of these extinct animals are found flint instruments most clearly of human manufacture. The characteristic features of the *stone-period*, as compared with the flint-period, consists in the fact of the stone implements being polished or rubbed into a smooth surface, while the flint instruments are merely chipped into shape. In the possession of Mr. Sanford, of Nynehead Court, there is a fine specimen of this interesting relic of our semi-savage and uncivilized ancestors. The stone celt to which I have referred was found on the Nynehead Estate, and therefore justifies our associating the attendant social condition with the neighbourhood of Taunton. Of the same kind of stone celt there are numerous examples in the Museum of the Society. The period itself is removed by an immense interval of time from that in which this rhinoceros was embedded, but it must at the same time be regarded as merging gradually and almost imperceptibly into the higher forms of civilized life, indications of which occur belonging to subsequent ages.

Bearing in mind the character of the geological formations—the well-known existence of copper ore in the Quantocks—and the important consideration that all the chemical and physical agencies of nature had been at work for ages in disintegrating and washing down into the stream-beds the copper ore which the rocks contained, I do not consider that we are in the least violating the probabilities of the case when we picture to ourselves the charcoal furnaces which the rude miners and smelters of

that day erected among the hills, supplying themselves and their neighbours with the bronze celts so characteristic of this period. The hardness of these metal implements is due to the admixture of tin with the copper. Upon analysis it is found to be in the proportion of nine parts of copper to one of tin. The discovery of tin, and the conversion by smelting of the tin ore into the metal, must have been long anterior to the earliest visits paid to this island by the Phœnician traders. It is contrary to all probability that the business-like merchants of Tyre should charter their vessels to the shores of Britain on a mere voyage of discovery. There was nothing *a priori* to lead them to expect these islands to have been metalliferous; and the perils of a sea voyage in Northern latitudes, and in the face of our stormy shores, would effectually keep down the spirit of mere curiosity. In fact, I believe that considerable progress in metallurgy had been made by the ancient inhabitants of this Western part of Great Britain long before the Phœnician vessels entered our natural harbours, or sailed up our rivers for copper and tin; and this would have become known to the Phœnicians at Marseilles, to which port the produce of this island had been conveyed overland by kindred tribes from the opposite shores of ancient Gaul. The allusions and the recorded observations which abound in the Commentaries of Julius Cæsar appear to me necessarily to imply a much higher degree of civilization among the inhabitants of this island previous to the Roman Invasion than is usually attributed to them. The war-chariots which Julius Cæsar describes were not rude playthings, but well constructed, and for those days efficient engines of war. I need not point out how much of skill and manual dexterity, how varied the tools and systematic mechanical appliances, which the production of such an engine involves. They were no savages who fought with the conquerors of the world in war chariots, who kept at bay the legions of Rome under the most skilful of her generals, and who ultimately drove them back over the channel into Gaul. Here, probably, the fearful pictures of human *sacrifices*, as reputed to be practised by the ancient Britons, will occur to many of my hearers, and seem to disprove the view I have given of this period. But on what authority does the imputation rest? On the testimony of their enemies, who misinterpreted the customs and legal forms of the country. All that has come down to us of the Druidic faith and religion proves it to have been one of the purest and simplest forms of pure Theism that could have existed apart from, and independent of, revelation. Sacrifices there may have been to *justice*—human sacrifices—but in no other sense and on no other ground than those which prevail in our country

when the sentence of death is executed. It was probably accompanied with more of pomp and imposing ceremonial—but the presence of the Druids and their Ovites, with the parade of religious ceremony, serves only to impress us with the higher sense entertained by them of the sanctity of human life. This we learn on the testimony of Julius Caesar; and from the same authority we are taught that a constant communication was kept up, and a close alliance maintained, between the Veneti in Armorica and their opposite neighbours—the inhabitants of Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. It was the material help rendered to them by the Britons of the Western district during their insurrection against the Roman Dynasty, about 57 B.C., which brought upon Britain the Roman invasion of Caesar. The Veneti were of Celtic origin. The Belgæ, further North, had a large German or Teutonic element both as to bodily frame and in language. It is not improbable that the same distinctions may have originally obtained in this island, which would lead us to regard the original inhabitants of the Western counties as more purely Celtic than the Belgæ. Be that as it may, these side lights of history, supplied by the Commentaries of Julius Caesar, justify us in looking upon this district, half a century before the commencement of the Christian era, as occupied by a race of people whose associations and pursuits made them the fitting allies of a great and powerful people on the Continent. The chief who wielded the bronze celt now in this museum, and which was dug up at Staple Fitzpaine, may have been of the number of those who had fought against the Romans in Gaul. The golden torque and massive bracelet which adorned his person, and the like ornaments which graced the fairer form of his bride; the fibula which fastened the flowing robes of their priests and Druids, are all indications of a culture and refinement the credit of which has been unjustly withheld from our Celtic ancestors of this period. Their towns and villages and their homes were no doubt of the simplest, and in our eyes of the most rude character. The houses, judging from the allusions of ancient writers and the character of the remains which have survived, were probably all circular. They were in form sometimes conical, sometimes hive-shape, according to the materials at hand. Sometimes these houses appear in clusters on the sunny sides of steep hills, where there would be abundance of food and water. In other cases they were strongly entrenched with extensive earthworks. The very large area of the fortifications at Castle Neroche; the no inconsiderable strength of the fortress at Norton; the larger three-fold arrangement of the ancient British camp and cattle enclosures at Roborough, a little beyond Broom-

field Common; and the fortified summit of Douseborough on the Quantocks, supply ample proofs that the neighbourhood of Taunton must have been tolerably thickly inhabited before the date of the Roman invasion. Here the question naturally suggests itself—Was there a British settlement on the present site of Taunton? We have no means at present of solving that question. Most of you have heard of the old tradition that—

Norton was a market town

When Taunton was a furzy down.

There can be no doubt of the great antiquity of Norton. The earthworks above the churchyard there are a clear proof of it. But whatever the site of Taunton may have been originally, there is no reason to suppose it ever could have been a *furzy down*. The rich alluvial deposit of this vale would afford too favourable a scope for the growth and spread of the elm to admit of the presence of the gorse. When we come to the time of Ina, the Saxon king, we shall have positive evidence of the existence of the castle, and therefore of the town of Taunton. From this there is a strong presumption in favour of its existence in ancient British times, and this presumption is confirmed by the line of the ancient British road which passed through the vale of Taunton Deane. Undoubted portions of that road are still clearly visible on the Eastern and Western sides of the town. If you connect the old road, sometimes known as the old Roman road, which leads from Bathpool to Taunton, with the lane commencing at the Ramshorn Bridge, in the fields below and to the West of Belmont, you have a continuation of that strikingly interesting relic of ancient British times which terminates near Stone-gallows, on the road to Wellington. That line would keep a little to the South of Taunton proper, passing over the site of the Convent, crossing Ash Meadows to Wilton, and therefore going over the crown of the hill to Ramshorn Bridge. Wills-neck and Williton have, not without reason, been considered as indications of Celtic occupation during the encroachments of the Saxon invasion—the Wëllas-neck, the Wëllas-town, being the names by which the Saxons called these places. I do not see why our own Wilton may not be placed in the same category. It may have been the site of the ancient British town, and after the building of the castle on the river-side have gradually given place to its more thriving neighbour. For a confirmation or a refutation of this hypothesis we must wait until some lucky chance may bring to light the undoubted tokens of the occupation which we now regard only as probable. Such, briefly, were the leading features of the people who dwelt in and near the place on which we are now assembled—a



warlike people, yet no strangers to the arts of peace and the pursuits of agriculture (were there not *three* kinds of bread corn found at Worlehill?)—a people who worked in metal not for necessity alone, but for personal ornament as well—a people devoted to religion and knowledge and astronomical science, and so distinguished for culture as to be made the educators of the princes of Gaul—a people, as we have seen, who were no strangers to the power and influence of the great nations of the world—men who had stood face to face with the far-famed Roman legions in Gaul, on the land of their friends and allies. The time was drawing near when they would be called upon to meet those legions on their own shores. Rumours of approaching conflicts had already reached this country by the traders from Armorica. At length the tidings came. The Roman fleet had crossed the channel: the sacred shores of Britain had been invaded: the Roman legions were landed. Everywhere, on the hills and in the valleys, nought was heard but the bustling preparations for war. A new and eventful period begins in the history of this country, and the scene is grand and full of interest.

The calculations of Astronomical Science, based on a few significant facts relative to the tides and the moon's age, given in the Commentaries of Julius Caesar, enable us to determine even the very day of the month on which the landing was effected (Aug. 26, B.C. 55). When the Western Contingent passed through Taunton Deane Eastward, the early corn-harvest was falling under the reaping-hook. Before the harvest was over, and while the peaceful occupiers of the soil were still engaged in gathering in the corn, the war chariots had returned, with the joyful intelligence that the Romans were come and were gone. In fact, the first invasion of Britain by Caesar was an entire failure. His forces kept to the sea shore where they landed, and within a month from the day of their landing all the forces that remained to the Roman general were again embarked for Gaul. The event was duly celebrated in Rome with a pompous triumph, as a glorious victory. Caesar himself knew it was a defeat, and so did his soldiers, and so above all did the stalwart Britons who had resisted his progress, kept him at bay, and ultimately driven him back.

Indeed there is every reason to believe that the first invasion by Caesar was throughout a mistake. If he came to Britain, as he states, to punish the allies of the Veneti, he ought to have landed on the coast of Devon, and not on that of Kent. The harbours from whence the British merchantmen conveyed their merchandise and, when needed, their warriors, to help their opposite neighbours in Gaul, were those of Axmouth, which at that time was

a noble estuary, extending up as far as Colyford, the final destruction of which by the formation of the shingle beach occurred subsequent to the Norman Conquest; or, further West, those at the mouth of the Exe or the Teign. The tribes inhabiting this Western district were of pure Celtic origin. They were as distinct from the Belgæ, who had settled on the Eastern shores of Britain, as the Veneti were from the Belgæ at the same time occupying the Northern regions of Gaul. From Neroche, on the borders of Taunton Deane, to Hawksdown Camp, commanding the mouth of the Axe at Seaton, there is now to the present day an unbroken chain of British fortresses with cattle stations. There was also a road to this same harbour, identical with the present one from Taunton to Seaton, portions of which remained until comparatively lately as undoubted proofs of its existence during the Roman occupation. There was in particular the Morwood Causeway, not far from the "Travellers' Rest," about a quarter of a mile in length, and 15 feet wide, composed of very large flint stones laid with their flat sides uppermost, and resting upon a deep artificial bed of smaller stones and gravel. This was probably the highway of communication between the ancient inhabitants of Taunton Deane and their kinsmen in Gaul. The chiefs who commanded the strongholds, and many of those who travelled along this road, had probably faced the Roman legions in Gaul under the banners of their kinsmen the Veneti; and although they were now returning from a short campaign, without an engagement, with the welcome tidings of the rapid withdrawal of the Roman legions from the British shores, yet they must have felt that when the Winter was passed the indomitable courage and perseverance of the Roman general would not fail to bring the vast resources of the empire to bear upon them with increased severity. We are justified, then, in assuming that as soon as the British chieftains had returned home after the withdrawal of the Roman forces, they applied themselves with increasing diligence and energy to the preparations needful for the conflict that was pending. The corn-harvest which the rich and sunny slopes of Taunton Deane yielded that Autumn would have been hoarded with more than usual care. When the corn was housed, all who were able to bear arms were no doubt engaged in military exercises, preparing to defend their country, their liberties, and their homes. The martial spirit, indigenous to this favoured soil, would seem to have descended to their representatives, the Taunton Volunteers of our own day, who, however, have seized the weapons of war with far less urgent reasons than their predecessors, the ancient Britons.

In like manner, at the same time, would the workers in metal all around ply their trade with increasing vigour, and the liquid bronze would often be seen casting its lurid light through the thick darkness of the Winter evening from the many charcoal smelting-furnaces erected in the retired dells and shady coombs among the Quantock Hills. The bronze celts and spear heads cast over night would scarcely have time to cool before the sounds of the hammer and clink of the anvil might be heard mingling with the early matin-song of the birds and the lowing of the herds of milch cows driven home from the pastures on the hill-side.

Around Treborough and Dunster also the ironmasters of that early age would be urging on their workmen to meet the pressing demands for the metal which their rich hæmatite ore produced. I do not know where the Veneti were more likely to have obtained the iron used in the construction of their ships than from their opposite neighbours and allies, the inhabitants of Devon and Somerset. Those of my readers who have not forgotten their school-day knowledge will remember Cæsar's description of the shipbuilding of the Gauls, and that, among other facts, he states that they "were built entirely of oak," that the planks and cross-beams were made fast by "iron bolts," *clavis ferreis*, and the anchors were made safe, not by rope cables, but by "iron chains," *ferreis catenis*. And why may not the scoræ of old iron-smelting furnaces which are found on the Blagdon Hills, above Forches Corner, and which caused even the Saxon stranger to assume the existence of "forges" there in olden time, be the remains of that period? In the present day I know that iron ore can be worked profitably only in the neighbourhood of the great coal-field, but in the early ages the forests which covered the land supplied the only fuel required. There is, therefore, no reason, I submit, why the rich iron ore in the green sand formation, which anyone, even now, may see cropping out in the road cutting at Forches Corner, may not have been worked by the ancient Britons to supply themselves and their neighbours with iron cables for their ships, and iron-work for their chariots and chariot-wheels.

Such were the toils of the busy day; and when the day's work was done, often around the blazing fires which stood in the centre of the circular dwellings of that age, would the more ardent youth be gathered to listen to the recital of warlike daring and feats of skill and courage which the veteran warriors could relate. Many and eager would be their inquiries as to arms and carriage of the Roman soldier, and of all the attendant circumstances of Roman warfare. Thus they would wile away the long hours of

the night, and not disperse until the mouldering embers of the fire, and the cold clear light of the winter stars, seen through the aperture overhead (window and chimney in one), warned them that the hour of rest was long passed.

Nor are we to suppose that to the ancient Britons at this time there were altogether wanting the hallowed sanction and ennobling influences of religion in the midst of the excitement and the din of warlike preparations. Religiousness has in all ages been one of the most striking characteristics of the Celtic race. Accordingly, whatever may have been the toils or the watchings of the previous night, crowds of devout, though *we* with our greater privileges may well regard them as unenlightened worshippers, might be seen with the early dawn making their way to the sacred circle, described with upright stones on some favoured upland, from whence the rising and setting sun might be seen. There would they be met by the Druids and their Ovites, in flowing robes and with the characteristic insignia of their sacred office.

On Cothelstone or on Blagdon such a sacred circle may have existed, and there before the Cromlech (the "bowing stone") the worshipper laid himself prostrate, doing humble homage to the Great Spirit, of whose beneficence the glorious sun at its rising seemed to him a fit and appropriate emblem. From the high-place of sacred worship they would descend into the vale, and, amidst the lowlier duties of daily life, endeavour to carry out the higher sanctions and duties which the Druids had there inculcated.

Thus passed the Winter immediately succeeding the first attempted Roman invasion. The British chieftains knew they were safe until after the Spring equinoctial gales were over, but the tidings which were brought from time to time by the traders from Gaul gave them no hope of a much longer respite. Cæsar was already making preparations for his second invasion. Because the channel was there more narrow, and the Romans were not very good sailors, he chose very much the same place for his second landing. From a careful consideration of the evidence which history supplies, and even what admissions Cæsar himself has unintentionally made, there is reason, I think, to suspect that he hoped to profit by the treachery of some of the Belgic chiefs and their people.

He came; and, doubtless, much to the relief of the anxious hearts of the fond mothers who cared for our ancestors on the banks of the Tone, he landed the second time in Kent. The campaign this time extended over four or five months. They came after the Spring, and left before the Autumn equinox had set in. But, with all the



special provisions made, Cæsar with great difficulty fought his way inland to the distance of about 100 miles, and then he found himself so surrounded and beset by the native forces, and so harassed by their admirable military tactics, that he was glad the second time to withdraw his forces, and to leave the Britons really unconquered.

Whether the Celtic tribes from Dumnonia took part in the conflict or no, we have no evidence; but the probability is so strong, especially considering that Cassibelaunus (Casse-velyn—the chief of the brazen helmet) who offered the most stubborn resistance to Cæsar, was himself a pure Celt and the ruler over the same or kindred races with those which at that time occupied this part of Somerset, that we have sufficient reason to believe that some of the chieftains whose dust is now mingled with the sod of Taunton Deane, or whose bones lie underneath the barrows on Brown-down, may have been of the number of those whose skill, and courage and daring became the subject of praise and admiration even to their enemies.

Be that as it may, up to this time the rich plains and gently undulating hills of West Somerset were a virgin soil unpolluted by the tread of the Roman oppressor. Cæsar did not penetrate thus far, and the words which the poet Lucan uses in his *Pharsalia*, though the acknowledged partizan of Pompey, in this case truly describe the event when he said of Cæsar—

Territa quæsitis ostendit terga Britannis.  
"He saw the British foe, and, frightened,  
Turned his back, and fled."

The real independence of the country was left quite unimpaired by the second invasion.

Nearly a hundred years passed before the Romans again attempted to land on the shores of Britain with hostile forces. The Ancyran Marbles tell us of deputations from the British kings who waited upon Augustus. And in the reign of Tiberias there is evidence of friendly relations, but none of subjection. Caligula contemplated an attack; but the sight of the boisterous channel frightened away what little manly courage he possessed, and he was content to gather shells from the sea-shore, and celebrated a triumph over them. At length the Emperor Claudius landed, and the conquest of Britain, such as it was, began under Aulus Plautus, in the year of our Lord 43. But the Roman invasion does not seem to have reached this district, as far as I can see, at any time before the campaign conducted by Ostorius Scapula against the Silures, who held the coast opposite Somersetshire on the other side of the Severn Sea. This was after the year 50 of the Christian era.

Within seven or eight miles from Taunton, as the crow flies, on the Quantock hills, near to where Lord Taunton has built his beautiful lodge, there remains to the present day a square encampment, which may possibly mark the spot where the Roman army first rested in this district. I should not have said "rested," for with the British fortress of Ruborough on one side, and the stronghold of Douseborough on the other, with Norton camp in the valley, with Neroche and Milverton in the distance, but within sight of the Roman scouts, there would not be much rest to the invading force.

With varying success the conflict was maintained for a long time, until at length the Romans would seem to have settled down in quiet participation, with the native races, of all the comforts and privileges which the country supplied. In many cases they evidently took possession of the fortifications which the ancient Britons had originally constructed, in some cases modifying and adapting them to their own principles of military castramentation, as may be seen in a striking manner on Ham-hill.

The generation which had withstood the inroads of Ostorius Scapula had been swept away by the ravages of war and time. Other generations had followed, so that about the second and third centuries of the Christian era all or most of the ancient animosities were gone, and we see the Roman and the Briton lying side by side, each in possession and enjoyment of his own.

The museum of the Society contains many indications of the security which was felt by the Romans as regards life and property. The beautiful fragment of tessellated pavement from East Coker, and the elaborate drawings of similar floors at Pitney, and also in the immediate neighbourhood of Chard, are indications of a peaceful and undisturbed occupation. Men do not incur the expenses which buildings of this kind involve, with a tenure likely to be disturbed. The excavations made on the site of Roman villas in our own country have brought to light evidences not only of comfort and elegance, but also of what in our own days would be deemed a most luxurious style of living. All the many appliances of their higher civilization the Romans introduced with them, and many of these no doubt the native princes would adopt. They who were described by Cæsar as the chosen educators of the nobles of Gaul would most probably be as apt as pupils as they were successful in the capacity of teachers. How far the fact of dependence and subjection would have affected the national character it is difficult to say; but it is left on record that the youth of Britain were quick to learn, and ready to apply the knowledge of art and science the Romans had to communicate.

The immediate neighbourhood of Taunton has not produced any undoubted tokens of permanent residence. There are no remains of Roman villas that I have ever heard of. There are, however, terraces, among other places in Holway farm, which present all the characteristic features of the platforms on which the villas were usually erected. I am able to make this statement, not as the result of my own observation alone, but also on the authority of Mr. Warre, whose judgment in such matters is deserving of every consideration, and who seems to have an intuitive knowledge of all that relates to earth-works. That the Romans were here in considerable numbers is clearly indicated by the large quantities of Roman coin which have been found from time to time—thus, at a place called Conquest, near Lydeard Lawrence; and at Stogumber, in 1666; on Holway Farm, in 1821; and also at Lillesdon, in the parish of North Curry; besides small quantities and single coins found elsewhere. There is nothing to show that the Romans ever occupied the town of Taunton, but they must at least have occupied in considerable force the neighbouring fortress of Castle-Ne-Roche; and if the Latin *Stabul* be the origin of the name *Staple-Fitz-Paine*, then there exists a strong presumption that a body of cavalry was stationed close by. We have in the museum some horse-shoes found in that neighbourhood, and which I know have been associated in the mind of some with this occupation of the locality by the Roman horse-soldiers. But an insuperable objection to our acceptance of this hypothesis presents itself in the curious fact, that with all the varied forms in which the Latin language has come down to us, in no single passage is a Latin word found which stands for horse-shoe. Columella, that most voluminous of Roman writers upon rural affairs, though most minute in other details, nowhere treats of the care needed in the shoeing of horses. But though this antique specimen may have no claim to be regarded as of Roman origin, it was found where Roman cavalry had no doubt often been exercised, and possibly trials of skill and horsemanship as between them and the charioteers of the ancient British chiefs.

If, however, the officers of the Roman army and the officials of the Roman empire have never lived at Taunton, they must often have travelled along the old road which passes near to it, on their way to the Roman station at Exeter and farther West. Taunton Deane is and always has been the natural thoroughfare, both in war and in peace, between the Eastern and Western districts of the island. The character of the equipages would, of course, vary with the varying character and station of the owners. It is well known that the Roman officials often carried

with them all the means and appliances of the easy and luxurious living at Rome. Hence we may picture to ourselves the busy scene along these roads on special occasions, when the *lectica* or palanquin of some Roman exquisite, borne and attended by a *posse* of slaves, barely escaped being crushed by the ponderous four-wheeled carriage of the country, which even in Rome itself bore, and in the Roman classics still bears, the name the Britons gave it—the *pedwar-rhod*—or *petorritum*. Then close behind came the state carriage of the great man in authority, ornamented with plates of embossed metal, sometimes of bronze, and sometimes even of silver. The various cohorts on the march moving from station to station would from time to time fill the simple inhabitants with great ideas of the power and influence of the Roman empire. Mingled with this feeling, no doubt, at times, was fierce anger and indignation on account of personal wrongs endured, and sufferings inflicted. The Romans, however, were not wont to interfere more than was absolutely necessary with the powers and authorities which they found existing, but suffered the internal social and political arrangements for the most part to remain as they found them. Hence, except where they established a *Colonia* or a *Municipium*, the authority and jurisdiction of the native *Reguli* or Princes were co-ordinate with those of the Roman official.

That the British people by degrees partook of the culture which Roman civilization brought with it is probable; and their commercial enterprise would also give a greater impetus to the mining operations carried on at that time in various parts of the country.

I know of nothing specially to connect this neighbourhood with any of the stirring scenes which characterised the eventful occupation of Britain by the Romans. What part the inhabitants took in the election and deposition of emperors—how many, if any of them, swelled the ranks of the British cohorts which served under the Roman standard in Egypt, in Armenia, in Spain and Illyricum—history does not relate. But of this we may be sure—they did not fail to see the tokens of decay and dissolution in the administration of the Roman empire, nor would they have been slow to avail themselves of the distraction and confusion occasioned by the inroads of the Goths. And as the first Roman invasion was undertaken because of the help rendered by the South-western tribes of Britain to the Veneti, so we find the same district of Gaul uniting with their ancient allies in a simultaneous demand for their national liberties when the revolt of Britain and Armorica was declared in the reign of Honorius.

The Roman silver coins which were ploughed up at Holway—a series of which has been presented to the society by their owner, Mr. William Blake—are as clear and as sharp as when they came out from the coiner's hand; they had evidently never been in circulation. The same is said of those found at North Curry. The historical period which they embrace comes down to that very Honorius who, as emperor of the West, confirmed the independence of Armorica and Britain. These facts indicate a sudden and hasty departure, and justify us in assuming that these treasures may have been buried by a Roman official near the spot where he was stationed, in the hope of returning again into this rich and beautiful vale when the revolt was quelled and the Roman authority was restored.

We now pass on to the Saxon occupation of this neighbourhood, and review their proceedings and the erection of Taunton Castle.

The foundations and the remains of the Castle, as it now stands, and as we know it did stand in the middle ages, afforded us hardly any data by which to realise the form and dimensions of that building which the Saxon king erected on this spot. In general arrangement it most probably corresponded to its more modern successor; but, instead of the solid massive masonry of the Norman period, we should find wood work. What attempt there might have been in the way of architectural effect we can have no means of judging as to detail. Yet when we carefully set together the various facts which have come down to us on the veritable page of history—when we considered the social conditions which grew out of the period they were contemplating—when they called to mind the elaborate and the truly elegant forms which the personal ornaments of that period present—we were fully justified in assuming that the dwelling of the Saxon Ina was such in architectural effect as became a king. Here, then, for a while did the Saxon king reside, surrounded by all the rude splendour characteristic of that period, the pleasures and amusements of the court not unfrequently disturbed and interrupted by the shrill clarion of the battle-field. The land was held in subjection by main force. Under many a seemingly courteous and submissive form there lay a heart burning with hatred and revenge. And the flame of discontent broke out from time to time, giving the armed forces of Ina but little rest or relaxation.

Amidst these conflicting elements, arising from differences of race and opposing interests, what power was there to be invoked by which harmony and order might be secured? That power King Ina wisely judged to be

the power of law and justice. Accordingly the King summoned together the estates of the realm, acting in the most constitutional manner, while as yet this kingdom possessed no formal constitution in reality. He called together the clergy, his nobles, and the wisest of the commons, to confer together with him on the laws and regulations which have made the name of Ina famous. At length the important day arrived. In the hall of Taunton Castle—possibly on the very spot where law and justice were administered afterwards for many generations—were “the fatherhood and the aldermen and the commons” assembled, under the presidency of Ina, to confirm and establish the laws by which the nation should be governed. The king, with his prudent forethought, and the clergy, with their fuller appreciation of right and justice, and a deeper feeling of Christian love and charity, would have much to contend with in that solemn assembly. The Saxon noble, who might have lost his only son in conflict with the resisting Britons, would be loth to admit the conquered Briton into all the privileges of citizenship on an equality with themselves: they who had for generations kept up all the evils of hereditary feuds, who had received from fathers, and hoped to hand down to their sons and grandsons, the animosities which kept apart those who ought to be good friends and neighbours, were jealous of any interference with these their private quarrels. But, in spite of all, truth and justice prevailed. And it stands on the page of history—to the honour of Ina and of Taunton—that here, in the seventh century of the Christian era, laws were passed which clearly regulated the administration of justice; which provided due compensation for crimes; which checked all hereditary feuds; and which placed the conquered Briton in the same favourable position as the conquering Saxon. Alas, for the vain hopes of man, and his often fruitless efforts! The laws of Ina were ultimately adopted as the laws of the Heptarchy; but they did not save him from wars or rebellion. There was an enemy within—there was an enemy without. The very spot which had been made sacred by the enactment of those righteous laws to which I have referred was seized and occupied by Ealdbright, who claimed the crown. The king was probably absent in distant parts of his dominions; but his noble and brave Queen Ethelburgha summoned together his loyal subjects, and attacked the traitor in the stronghold of his sovereign. So fierce is the conflict, so dreadful the strife, so dogged the resistance, that with a sad heart Ethelburgha finds it needful to destroy the home sacred to her dearest memories, and to raze the Castle of Taunton. The record in the Saxon chronicles is very simple and brief, but very signifi-

cant:—"A.D. 722. This year Queen Ethelburgha razed Taunton, which Ina previously built, and Aldbryht the exile departed into Surrey and Sussex." And now Taunton fades away from historic view. Ina himself retires from the active scenes of vigorous enterprise and wise beneficence, and with his queen finds in Rome a retreat and a resting-place, after the toilsome and eventful labours of his long reign. The Saxon chronicle records: "A.D. 728. This year Ina went to Rome, and there gave up his life; and Athelheard, his kinsman, succeeded to the kingdom of the West Saxons." He was not destined, however, to hold quiet possession of his dominions, for, apart from other troubles, we find in the Saxon chronicle that in 733 Æthelbald (king of the Mercians) conquered Somerton, having no doubt to contend with many a brave soldier from Taunton Deane, fighting in the defence of their king. Whether it was from a special regard to the supposed interests of Taunton, or in order to confer a special favour on the church and diocese of Winchester, or both, we find in this reign that the Castle and Manor of Taunton were conferred upon the Bishop of Winchester, and his successors for ever, by Fritheswitha, the queen of Æthelbald. (Several other important manors were subsequently added by Emma, the mother of Edward the Confessor.) Attached to the temporalities of the See of Winchester, these manors continued until a comparatively recent period; and arising out of this connection there are many circumstances and events which will in future pass before us in review in the historical pictures of Taunton and its neighbourhood during the middle ages. Meanwhile, another and very important element presents itself in the experience of this district—much more prominent and more important than any of the facts in the brief and scanty record of the period would lead us to expect. I refer to the fearful ravages of the Vikings, who landed from time to time on the shores of North Somerset, and extended far and wide inland the miseries of fire and sword. During this time, I have no doubt, the heights of Quantock, and the comparatively easy access through the vale of Bishop's Lydeard, from Minehead and Porlock, would often have been the battle-field between the Danes and the Saxons, and the native Bret-wellas united, to resist the inroads of a common foe. That noble military structure, on the highest point of Quantock, which still bears the name of Danesborough, stands as a lasting record; for though the earthworks and fortifications are undoubtedly British, and of a much earlier date, there is no reason to doubt but that the name it bears is due to local tradition of its occupation by the Danes. In the chronicle passing under the name of Ethelward, which

was dedicated by him to the daughter of Otho the Great of Germany, and the niece of the no less great Athelstan of England, we have it recorded that "in the year of our Lord 844 (having three years before fought against the Danes at Charmouth), Duke Eanwulf, who governed the province of Somerset, and Ealston also, and Osric duke of Dorset, fought a battle with the Pagans at the mouth of the Parrett, where they gained the victory and defeated the Danish army. But though victorious on this occasion, they secured no long-continued exemption from the ravages of fire and sword at the hands of the heathen pirates, who seemed to have swarmed on all our coasts, hordes succeeding to hordes in those sudden and devastating raids which for a long time characterised the movements of the Danish invaders. Often and often, no doubt, during this period, has the blood-red banner of the Dane, with the grim form of the black raven, struck terror and consternation into the heart of Taunton Deane, as the fierce heathen rushed down the heights behind Hestercombe, or, after a rapid march in the darkness of night, appeared with the early dawn in the midst of the rich and well-stocked pastures of the vale. And so it continued from time to time, until at length Alfred the wise and the good appears on the page of history, shedding the radiance of his glory on this country and on his native land. Among Alfred's vassals and his nobles no doubt, were many whose homes were in Taunton and the neighbourhood, for, apart from the claims of loyalty and patriotism, Alfred, the lineal descendant of King Ina's brother, and the representative of the king himself, would be sure to command the willing and devoted services of those whose forefathers had fought under Ina himself, within and around the walls of Taunton. If the interpretation of the early records of that period suggested by Mr. Gabriel Poole be correct, and the "Edington" of the great battle in which the Danes were vanquished by Alfred was the Edington of the Polden Hills, then did Taunton and the men of Taunton Deane no doubt perform an important part in the military movements of that campaign. Assembling near Monksilver, between Crowcombe and the sea—resting at Ely-green, on the northern slopes of the Quantock, the following day—they would meet the Danes face to face on the Polden Hills. And there, when Alfred had won the victory and the Danish King Guthrum become his captive, nothing would be more natural than that he should take with him his prisoner to his retreat at Athelney, and that in due time the Pagan king should submit to the Christian ordinance of baptism at the neighbouring shrine of Aller.

## The Valley of the Tone.

O ever lovely, beautiful and new,  
Nature, alone immortal, breathes around!  
And, with benignant hand, doth wildly strew  
For me, her votary, the varied ground  
With her sweet flowers, as lightly, to the sound  
Of murmuring waters, down that vale I stray,  
By wooded slope and verdant summit bound.

*Draper.*

## The Days of King Alfred.



HE Rev. Joseph Nightingale, in his work entitled "The Beauties of England and Wales" (published in 1815), says that in those obscure and barbarous times the progress of Christianity must have necessarily been slow and uncertain, for it was not only opposed by existing superstitions, but thwarted by sanguinary and destructive wars. The incursions of the Danes kept the country in a state of continual alarm, and at times threatened its total subjugation. In the reign of the great Alfred they desolated almost every province in Britain, and at length carried their ravages into this beautiful valley, which had long remained safe against their encroachments. The young monarch was constrained to relinquish his throne and dignity, and to preserve himself by disguise and concealment. He retired to an obscure part, and lived for some time in the house of a neatherd, being retained by him to take care

of his cows. During his residence here an incident occurred which, though in itself trivial, has been deemed sufficiently interesting to merit a place in history. The neatherd's wife, ignorant of the rank of her guest, considered him as of no higher station than that to which he professed to belong, and treated him accordingly. One day, observing him busy by the fire-side trimming his bows and arrows, she desired him to watch some cakes that were baking on the hearth while she attended to some other domestic matters. He, having greater subjects to occupy his mind, neglected his charge, and the good woman on her return, finding the cakes burnt, gave the king a severe scolding, and told him that he was always ready enough to eat her warm cakes, however careless he might be in baking them. It is stated that he afterwards remembered the hospitality and kindness of his host, for, observing him to be a man of talent, he encouraged him to apply to learning, and made him Bishop of Winchester.

A modern poet thus sings the well-known story of King Alfred and his men :—

Clad in a common soldier's guise,  
To hide his rank from searching eyes,—  
Bereft of home, of friends, of fame,  
A fugitive, without a name,—  
King Alfred left his little band,  
Like outlaw, in his own fair land !  
And when grey eve, at length, had thrown  
Her misty robe o'er vale and down,  
The monarch from his covert came,  
With somewhat like a sense of shame,  
That he, who never from a foe  
Had turned his face, or shunned a blow,  
Should thus alone, in secret, flee.  
But 'twas the will of Destiny !

Thus did the musing monarch then—  
And passing on through wood and fen,  
He came unto that lonely Isle—  
Whose fixed locality and name  
Were destined to all future fame—  
Just as the sun's departing smile  
Shed o'er the scene that welcome ray,  
As closes oft a winter's day.

Between the Parret and the Tone,  
Remote from towns, secure and lone,  
Embower'd o'er with alder-wood,  
And bordered by the spreading flood.

Among the sedge the heron stirr'd,  
The wild duck o'er the waters whirr'd ;  
And wandering bees sweet pasture found  
Upon that rich alluvial ground ;  
While one, apart from other men,  
Who dwelt upon that Island then,  
Was—happier lot might well not be—  
A neatherd, with his family ;  
And food, and shelter for his head,  
King Alfred found beneath his shed,  
Repaying for his homely fare,  
By sharing in the herdsman's care.

Now sallying from his secret hold,  
Begirt with train both keen and bold,  
He found detachments of the foe  
Outspread o'er all the country round,  
As locusts, ravaging the ground,  
And frequent dealt a sudden blow,  
So rapid, they could seldom tell  
From whence, like thunder-bolt, it fell !  
Or, when repressed by force awhile,  
Retreating to his sheltering Isle,  
The Dane soon felt, by night or day,  
Again the forage and the fray.

Draper.

When the pursuit and search of his enemies became less strict, he collected some of his faithful adherents, and retired to a spot of land a few acres in extent, surrounded by water and impassable marshes, at the conflux of the

rivers Parret and Tone. Here he built a habitation, and constructed a long bridge to connect his retreat with the neighbouring terra firma. The Western end of the bridge was fortified by what would, in modern military terms, be called a *tête-de-pont*, which rendered hostile approaches impracticable. This place he called Æthelingay, or the Isle of Nobles ; which name, with a slight alteration, is still preserved, being now written Athelney. Out of this stronghold he made frequent and sudden incursions on the Danes, and maintained himself and his followers by the spoil he procured. From this period the tide of his affairs "led on to fortune." After various successes he defeated the combined armies of the Danes at Edington, and took their pagan king, Guthrum, prisoner, whom he brought to his court at Aller, and there obliged him to receive the rite of baptism. In gratitude for his success he founded a monastery at Athelney, to the honour of St. Saviour and St. Peter the Apostle.

Tradition states that King Alfred's men, after travelling in inclement weather, came into these parts and made fires with the green boughs of the ash tree, the quick burning of which much surprised them, not having been accustomed to see it. It is said that this event is annually celebrated in Taunton by the "Ashen-fagot Ball."

In the Saxon times this county, as well as others, was subject to certain officious earls, who had authority to try and decide causes, and to punish malefactors within their jurisdiction. The first Earl of Somerset was a warlike chief, named Hun, who lived in the reign of King Egbert, whom he attended in the war which he waged against Beornulf, King of Mercia, and was slain in the battle of Ellendune, A.D. 823. Earnulf, or Enwulfe, succeeded him, either by inheritance or, as is more probable, by grant from King Ethelwolfe. After him this earldom appears to have been vacant for several years, until Sweyn, eldest son of Godwin, Earl of Kent, for some time held it. He was a man of violent temper and vicious disposition, of which he gave flagitious proofs by seducing Edgiva, Abbess of Leominster, to marry him, and by treacherously murdering his kinsman, Beorne, son of the King of Denmark. For this last crime he was forced to fly into Flanders, and to remain there until Aldred, bishop of Winchester, obtained for him the royal pardon. In a subsequent part of his life he was induced, by remorse for the murder, to undertake the penance of walking barefooted to Jerusalem. He died at Licia, on his return from thence, of a severe cold, which his hardships brought on.

# The Valley of the Tone.

"What ears so empty is, that hath not heard the sound  
Of Taunton's fruitful Deane ?—not match't by any ground."  
*Drayton's Polygraphon*, 48.

## The Norman Era.

**I**LTHOUGH the valley of the Tone and the Vale of Taunton Deane are not precisely the same, yet as one is generally included in the other, we propose in our description to treat them alike.

Great and numerous were the changes that took place in this neighbourhood, in common with all other parts of England, at the period now under consideration.

Our readers may be reminded that about three hundred years previously, the valuable manor of Taunton Deane, together with Taunton Castle (formerly a regal residence), had been begged by Queen Fritheswitha of her husband King Ethelard, and presented to the church or bishops of Winchester.

To this donation many privileges, prerogatives and immunities had been added, so that few manors were of such value. Dugdale, in his *Monasticon*, states that in the year 721 Ethelard's queen had given out of her patrimony the manor of Taunton to the church of Winchester, where she was buried; to which Ethelard himself added seven manses, or dwellings for peasants.

It is, however, asserted by other historians that the manor of Taunton was a grant of Queen Emma's, who, when a widow, was accused by Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, to King Edward the Confessor, her son, of incontinency with Alfwin, bishop of Winchester. Upon this charge the bishop was imprisoned, and the royal lady

treated with rigour. To exculpate her character she offered blindfolded and barefooted to pass over nine red-hot ploughshares, placed at unequal distances. This mode of trial, called the fiery ordeal, was generally adopted in those times; and in this case the appeal was considered as made to the providence of God, who, it was supposed, would miraculously support the innocent. The issue of the experiment, it is said, evinced the innocence of Queen Emma, who passed over them unhurt; and to express her gratitude to heaven, and to perpetuate the remembrance of her vindicated character, gave the manor of Taunton Deane, and eight other valuable manors, to the bishop of Winchester and his successors. But Dr. Richardson, the learned editor of Godwin, treats this story concerning Emma as a monkish fable, because the best and most careful historians near those times—Roger Hoveden, William of Malmesbury, Matthew of Westminster and others—take no notice of this wonderful escape.

A modern poet has thus recorded this stirring event:—

"Queen Emma, many a time of old slept safe  
From vile accusers, and from slander's rage;  
And where, with courage noble, well she proved  
Her queenly virtue to her lord most true,  
By walking blindfold, and with hoseless feet,  
On ploughshares nine (all heated in a flood  
Of fell and flashing flame to redness dread)  
Unhurt—unhurt—her proof of purity!

The worth of the manor at that time was computed at nearly seven hundred a-year, a princely income in those



days, sufficient to raise the value of the see of Winchester above most other sees of that period.

The following is the description of Taunton Deane from Domesday Book, compiled in the year 1086.

The bishop of Winchester holds Taunton. Archbishop Stigand (then bishop of Winchester) held it in the time of King Edward, and it paid the geld for fifty-four hides, and two yard-lands and a half, of which there was arable land sufficient for one hundred ploughs. Besides this the bishop has in demesne twenty carucates which never paid the geld, and thirteen ploughs. There are eighty villans, eighty-two bordars, seventy bondmen or slaves (*servi*), sixteen coliberti, and seventeen swineherds, who render seven pound ten shillings, and amongst them all they have sixty ploughs.

There are sixty-four burgesses in Taunton who pay thirty-two shillings, or sixpence each, to the bishop of Winchester for his protection.

There are three mills, which render ninety-five shillings.

The market yields fifty shillings.

There is a mint at Taunton, which yields a profit of fifty shillings.

There are forty acres of meadow, a common of pasture two miles long and one mile broad, and a wood one mile in length and the same in breadth.

When Bishop Walchelin received this manor it paid fifty pounds; it now pays one hundred and forty-four pounds and thirteen pence, with all its appendages and customs.

These are the customs of Taunton: Burgheristh, Latrones, Hundred Pence, Breach of the Peace, Heinfare, Church-set and St. Peter's Pence. The tenants attend the bishop's courts three times in the year without being summoned, and go to the army with the bishop's men.

The lands in the manor of Taunton subject to those customs are Tolland, Oake, Holford, Upper Cheddon, Lower (or South) Cheddon (now Cheddon Fitzpaine), Maidenbrook, Langford, Bishop's Hull, Heale, Ninehead, Norton (Fitzwarine), Bradford, Halse, Heathfield, Shapnoller (Soobindare), and Stoke; but the tenants of the two last are not liable to go to the army.

The tenants of Bagborough are subject to the same customs, except attendance on the army and on funerals.

The tenants of all these lands come to Taunton to swear fealty and to have justice administered; and when the lords of these lands die, they are buried in Taunton.

Bishop's Hull and Heale could not be separated from Taunton in the time of King Edward.

Of the above said fifty-four hides and a half, and half a yard-land, Geoffrey now holds of the bishop four hides

and one yard-land; Robert holds four hides and a half; and Hugh two hides and a half. There are in demesne ten ploughs, and twelve bondmen (slaves), twenty villans, and twenty-eight bordars or cottagers, with ten ploughs. There are thirty-seven acres of meadow, and forty-three acres of woodland, and a mill which belongs to the said Hugh, of the value of three shillings. The value of these lands altogether is twenty-seven pounds.

Of the aforesaid hides, Godwin holds under the bishop two, wanting half a yard-land; Leveva holds two hides; Alward holds one, and one yard-land and a half; Aluric and Edmer hold three hides; and Lewi half a yard-land. There are in demesne seven ploughs and thirteen bondmen (slaves), thirteen villans, and twenty bordars, with three ploughs and a half. There are two mills, which yield yearly six shillings and eightpence. There are forty-five acres of meadow, and sixty-one acres of woodland. The value of these lands altogether is eight pounds three shillings. The tenants who held these lands in the time of King Edward could not be separated from the church of Winchester.

Of the abovesaid hides, the earl of Moreton holds one; Alured one; John two and half a yard-land. There are in demesne two ploughs and six bondmen, twelve villans, and seventeen bordars, with three ploughs and a half. There are two mills which yield fourteen shillings and two pence, and nineteen acres of meadow, and a hundred acres of pasture, and twenty acres of woodland. These three parcels of land belonged to Taunton in the time of King Edward, and were of the yearly value of seventy shillings; they now pay six pounds ten shillings.

To the manor of Taunton are added two hides and a half in Lydeard St. Lawrence and Leigh (now Angersleigh), which a thane held in parage in the time of King Edward, and could choose for his patron, or protector, whatever lord he pleased; Ulward and Alward now hold these lands, by a grant from King William. The arable is sufficient for five ploughs; there are six villans, three bordars, and four bondmen, and eleven acres of meadow, a hundred acres of pasture, and forty-nine acres of woodland. These lands were, and are still, worth forty-five shillings.

The customs and services of these lands always belonged to Taunton, and King William granted them to the church of St. Peter of Winchester, and to Walchelin the bishop, as he himself testified in the presence of the bishop of Durham, to whom he gave command to prepare a writ to that effect.

The hundred of Taunton Dean is divided into three parts or districts—namely, the hundred of Taunton market,



the infaring division and the outfaring division. The hundred of Taunton market is so called in all the records of the manor, and comprehends that part which is distinguished as the borough of Taunton.

The infaring division, commonly called the Five Hundreds of Taunton Deane, is subdivided into the hundreds of Holway, Hull, Poundisford, Staplegrove and Nailsbourne, all of which are subject to the customs of this manor. This division includes the parishes of Taunton St. James, Ruishton, Stoke St. Mary, Wilton, Trull, Bishop's Hull, Pitminster, Corfe, Staplegrove, Kingston and Rimpton.

The outfaring division contains the several parishes of Angersleigh, Bagborough, Bradford, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Combe Florey, Cothelstone, Heathfield, Hillfarrance, Lydeard Saint Lawrence, Nynhead, Norton Fitzwarren,

Oake, Orchard Portman, Otterford, Tolland and Withiel Florey.

In little more than three hundred years after the grant of this manor to the see of Winchester, the last-mentioned sixteen parishes belonging to it were given by King William soon after the Conquest to his favourites, and thus became lay property.

Thirty-one hides of this manor, with twenty carucates which never paid the Dane-geld, having been so long granted to customary tenants by copy of court-roll, under small fines certain, rents, heriots and services, the latter have grown into customs, and at length were presented as such by the jury in 1647, and cannot now be altered. This holding is considered by the tenants as equal to a fee-simple tenure.



# The Valley of the Tone.

## Manor of Taunton and Taunton Deane.



AVAGE states that this manor is bounded by the manors of Broomfield, Iton, West Monkton, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Creech St. Michael, Thorn Falcon, Thurlbear, Orchard Portman, Staple Fitzpaine, Yarcombe, Churchstanton, Clayhidon, West Buckland, Bradford,

Bishop's Lydeard and Cothelstone.

It is divided into the hundreds of Holway, Hull, Poundisford, Staplegrove and Nailbourne. Each hundred is divided into various tithings.

In the time of Walter Curle, bishop of Winchester, who succeeded Bishop Neale in 1632, an Act of Parliament was passed, during the Cromwell usurpation, authorising the sale of all lands belonging to episcopal sees. By the return of the surveyors appointed under this Act for surveying the manor of Taunton, dated February 9th, 1647, in order to its being sold, it was found that the tenants of the five hundreds paid at the first coming-in of every bishop of Winchester, by way of acknowledgment, called recognition-money, as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
The tenants of the hundred of Holway .....	24	1	5½
The tenants of the hundred of Hull .....	10	2	6
The tenants of the hundred of Poundisford...	12	15	10
The tenants of the hundred of Staplegrove ...	13	1	3½
The tenants of the hundred of Nailbourne ...	9	17	10

The recognition-money is paid by bondland tenements only, and the tenants serve the office of reeve in rotation.

Previously to the sale of this manor taking place, the copyhold tenants were anxious to preserve their rights and customs, and accordingly a court of survey was holden at Taunton, by an ordinance of Parliament, on the

15th day of December, 1647, by Nathaniel Whetham, John Hurst, James Price and Sylvanus Taylor, surveyors, appointed for the sale of bishop's lands, when, a jury being sworn, the jurors drew up a presentment in which they inserted a full account of the privileges and immunities claimed by the tenants of the manor and liberty of Taunton, or belonging and appertaining to them, and which their predecessors had heretofore enjoyed, by virtue of any charter or grant made and granted to the several bishops of Winchester. This jury defended and preserved from the grasp of the parliamentary commissioners the customs of the manor, and reserved and restored the possession of the castle to the then lessee.

Accordingly on the 20th of March, 1647, the manor of Taunton and Taunton Deane, together with the castle and all the appurtenances belonging to the same, were sold by the trustees, under the above-mentioned act, to Brampton Gurdon, of Assington, in the county of Suffolk, Esq., and John Hill, of Taunton Deane, gent. But the manor was afterwards recovered by the bishop, and is vested in the see of Winchester.

A curious fact in connection with the manor is probably worth recording here. The author of this history was in an old farm-house at the village of Kingston in the year 1846, and observed an antiquated volume lying in a corner. He took it up, and found to his surprise it was a copy of all the lands and tenants of the Manor of Taunton, as surveyed in the year 1647. Upon inquiry he found several other old books on the same subject, which the owners kindly presented to him, and which he intends to deposit in the Somersetshire Archaeological Society's Museum at Taunton.

## Customs of the Manor of Taunton Deane.

In addition to the particulars contained in *Savage's History of Taunton*, books on this subject have been written by *Locke*, of *Burnham*, and *Shillibeer*, of *Taunton*, to which we would refer the reader who wishes to have further information. We now return to *Savage's* account.

## Tenure of the Manor of Taunton Deane.

The manor of *Taunton Deane* consists for the most part of customary freehold lands and tenements of inheritance, which are divided into two kinds, namely, bondlands, which are the ancient dwelling tenements, held by a customary fine and rent certain, and subject to heriots and manorial services; and overlands, where anciently no dwelling stood, held by a fine and rent certain, but exempted from the payment of heriots, and from every other custom, suit and service.

The bondland tenements oblige the tenants to execute the office of reeve and to collect the bishop's rents.

Formerly a court was held at the Exchequer every Saturday before the steward, or his deputy, for adjusting disputes among the tenants, and for recovering small debts; but as the fee for a summons was only one penny, for an attachment fourpence, for a declaration sixpence, an appearance twopence, and so in proportion with regard to other fees, it has for many years fallen into disuse; for those fees, having been established with the customs of the manor, as early as the eleventh century, cannot be altered, though the value of money, to which all fees should bear a proportion, is greatly changed and reduced since that period.

The customs and fines to which this tenure is subject are many and various; and an accurate knowledge of them can be obtained only by long experience. The mode of succession in this manor is singular, and is sometimes productive of very serious evils to families; for estates, according to the custom of it, descend to the widow of a man, though a second or third wife, to the prejudice of the issue under a prior marriage, who are totally pre-

cluded, though the lands were the ancient inheritance of their father.

The custom by which the younger son inherits before the elder, this tenure has in common with that called *Borough-English*. The learned have been at a loss to ascertain the origin and ground of a custom which thus inverts the order of nature. *Sir William Blackstone* conjectures, with great judgment, that it might be deduced from the *Tartars*. Amongst this people the eldest sons, as they advanced to man's estate, migrated from their father with a certain portion of cattle, and the youngest son only remaining at home, became, in consequence, heir to the father's house and all his remaining possessions. This conjecture not only assigns a natural and rational reason for a custom that on the face of it wears a strange appearance, but is confirmed by the consideration that not only this custom was long prevalent in *Tartary* and the Northern nations, but many other feudal practices prevail there; nay, the whole feudal system, while in Europe it is an exotic plant, is indigenous, universal and immemorial in the East.

The inconveniences which must sometimes arise from these singular customs are, in a degree, counterbalanced by the mode of conveyance practised in this manor; which is by a surrender of the estate, upon every sale or mortgage, into the hands of the lord; which surrender is lodged in the exchequer, or the room where all the titles of the manor are deposited, and may at any time be examined. This makes it easy to prove the validity of a title, and is a security against all frauds in mortgages.

There is no authority whatever for supposing that the manor of *Taunton* was ever in the possession of *Lord Bonville*, or in the family of *Lord Bonville* at all, or that it was ever separated from the Church of *Winchester*, except from 1647 to 1660, when it was sold, with other church property, under an ordinance of Parliament, during the *Cromwell* usurpation.

The manor has been passed down by sale or gift to the present time. The present owner is *Mr. Serjeant Cox*, a well-known *Taunton* man, of great energy, talent and position.

As regards the manners and customs of the people, and the progressive changes that have taken place, we would refer our readers to the pages on "*West Somerset*."

# The Valley of the Tone.

## Towns and Parishes.

Round these, in Spring, we view with ravish'd eyes,  
Italian scenes on English ground arise,  
Which, crown'd with Freedom, rival Paradise.

Dr. Amory.

Descriptions will be given of the following parishes, which have been surveyed expressly for this work:—*Ash Priors, Angersleigh, Ashbottle, Bishop's Hull, Brompton Ralph, Bishop's Lydeard, Broomfield, Bathealton, Bagborough, Bradford, Bickenhall, Creech St. Michael, Clatworthy, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Chipstable, Cothelstone, Crowcombe, Corfe, Combe Florey, Duroton, Fitzhead, Hatch Beauchamp, Halse, Huish Champflower, Heathfield, Hillsfarrance, Kittisford, Kingston, Langford Budville, Lyng, Lydeard St. Lawrence, Milverton, Norton Fitzwarren, Nynshead, North Curry, Oak, Orchard Portman, Pitminster, Ruishton, Raddington, Runnington, Stoke St. Mary, Stoke St. Gregory, St. Michael, Staplegrove, Sampford Arundel, Staple Fitzpaine, Stawley, Tolland, Thurloxton, Thorne St. Margaret, Trull, Thurlbear, Thorn Falcon, Wellington, Wiveliscombe, West Buckland, West Monkton, West Hatch, Wilton.*

As some of the words and terms given in the accounts are now out of date, and others not in general use, we have annexed a short description of a few of them, for the benefit of our younger or other readers.

*Alluvium*, rich soil, or washings of the hills.  
*Bordarii*, drudges, cutters of wood and drawers of water.  
*Carucate*, an ancient measure of land.  
*Colliberti*, middle sort of tenants.  
*Churofset*, first fruit or grain paid on kind.  
*Credence table*, a side table for the elements.  
*Demeene*, the land adjoining the chief residence.  
*Decorated style*, Gothic work between A.D. 1272 and 1461.  
*Encaustic or Mosaic*, floor tiles of curious designs.  
*Early English style*, Gothic work between the end of the 11th century and the close of the 13th.  
*Gold or Dane Geld*, a tax imposed in the year 991.  
*Hundred Pence*, a subsidy collected by the sheriff of the county.  
*Heinfare*, the absence of a servant from his master.  
*Liberi*, a class of tenants.  
*Latrones*, executing the law on thieves, &c.

*Norman style*, architecture between the year 1066 and the end of the 12th century.  
*Pannage*, the right of keeping hogs in woods.  
*Plough of land*, the quantity of land that a pair of oxen would plough in a year.  
*Perpendicular style*, Gothic architecture between the latter part of the 14th century to the middle of the 16th.  
*Piscina*, a recess with drain at the side of altar.  
*Rood-loft*, a gallery across the chancel.  
*Servi*, bondsmen or servants.  
*St. Peter's Pence or Romescott*, pence collected for the Pope.  
*Sancte Bell*, a bell rung on the elevation of the Host.  
*Saxon Work*, architecture previous to the year 1066.  
*Sedilia*, a Latin name for seat.  
*Villans*, servants or tenants of the Lord.  
*Virgate*, land held by the Verge—generally copyhold.

## Ash Priors.

**A**SH PRIORS is a small parish and village pleasantly situated six miles West of Taunton, one mile South-West of Bishop's Lydeard railway-station, and seven miles North of Wellington. It was formerly called Aissa, Assie, or Aixe, and probably received its name from the ash tree. Its second name was given it by the Priors of Taunton. In the time of Edward the Confessor it was part of the Manor of Bishop's Lydeard. At the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described in Domesday Book :—"Roger himself holds Aixe; Aibric held it in the time of King Edward, and gelded it for two hides. The arable is four carucates. In demesne is one carucate, and three servants and five villanes, and five cottagers with two ploughs. There are eight acres of meadow and ten acres of wood. Pasture two furlongs long and one furlong broad. It is worth twenty shillings. To the manor is added Aixa. Sawin held it of the Bishop of Wells in the time of King Edward," &c.

After the dissolution of monasteries, Henry VIII. granted the manor and rectory to John Leighe, from whence it passed to the Mores, Bostocks, Périams and Lethbridges.

The church is a pretty little building, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and consists of nave and North and South aisles and chancel. It is principally built of grey sandstone, in the Perpendicular style of architecture, and greatly requires restoration, nothing having been done for many years. There is a handsome font, and a little good old carving in the few oak bench ends that are left, which deserve particular notice. The pulpit is unworthy of the church. The South aisle was added in 1833, at the cost of Sir Thomas Lethbridge. The windows of this aisle are new. This little church is behind the world, and requires a thorough restoration to bring it up to the mark. It is quite time that the Western gallery was taken down. The nave seats are free. On the North side of the church is the turret to the ancient rood loft. There are monuments of the Blake and Bryant families. There are no

brasses nor any stained glass worthy of note. A barrel-organ is placed in the Western gallery. The tower is a small square structure, with a plain turret on the South side, and with heavy gurgoyles. It has a clock and a peal of six bells. The arches on each side of the chancel are of good design and workmanship. The church of Ash Priors is considered to have formerly been a chapel, probably served by a curate from the Priory of Taunton.

The living is a perpetual curacy of the annual value of seventy-eight pounds, in the gift of the Trustees of the late Sir Thomas Lethbridge, and is held by the Rev. Vaughan C. Day, M.A., of New Inn College, Oxford. In 1839 the tithes had been commuted at £110 per year, and the gift of them formerly belonged to the Prior of Taunton. The parsonage is near the church.

Adjoining are schools for boys and girls, supported by voluntary contributions.

The churchyard is very small. It contains monuments to the memory of Steevens, Skinner, Bradey, Babb, Bond, Hurford, Lawrence, Bryant, Towels, Fouracre and Hill families.

In the report of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners there is no account of this parish.

Ash Priors lies upon the new red sandstone series of rocks. The soil is sandy-loam, and produces a large quantity of wheat, barley, oats, mangold, turnips, potatoes, &c. There are several acres of common land at Ash Common adjoining, belonging to the parish, also with a right of commonage.

There are several quarries of red hard sandstone.

The Trustees of the late Sir Thomas Lethbridge are Lords of the Manor.

A Court Leet was formerly held here.

A revel is held on the fourteenth day after Whit-Sunday.

There is a small stream and mill in the village.

The chief landowners are the Trustees of the late Sir Thomas Lethbridge. The principal residence is Priory House, occupied by Mrs. Winter.

Ash Priors is in the Hundred of Kingsbury West, in the Magisterial Division and County Court District of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. It is in the highway district, and the new polling-place is at Bishop's Lydeard.

The nearest money-order office is at Bishop's Lydeard.

Letters arrive from Taunton at 7 a.m., and may be posted at Ash Priors until 5.30.

Nearest railway station Bishop's Lydeard, on the West Somerset line.

Ash Priors is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton, diocese Bath and Wells.

The rateable value in 1867 was £1,042, the county rate £1,042.

Its area is 612 acres; in 1839 it was returned as 570.

The population in 1831 was 201; in 1861 it was 207.

## Angersleigh



S a small parish, situated four miles South-West of Taunton and four miles South-East of Wellington. It was formally called Lega, Lege, Leigh Milites, or Knights Leigh, and derives its first name from the Anger family, who formerly had possessions in this parish. This manor was given by William the Conqueror to Walchelin, Bishop of Winchester, of whom it was held by one Aeward, a Saxon. John Anger was Lord of this Manor in 18th Edward II. In 1427 Rich Cheddar was the owner; from thence it passed to the Newtons, the Capels, the Proctors, the Gales and the Tuckers. This parish is pleasantly situated in a pretty country, under the slope of the Blackdowns. The land abounds with brown, red and yellow flint, some black jasper, and a few fossils.

Angersleigh, with some adjoining parishes, possesses an enterprising Agricultural Association. The annual meetings are held at Staplehay, where lectures have been given on subjects connected with the farming interest. A volume published by the society a few years ago contains a large quantity of interesting matter.

The church is a small, neat edifice, dedicated to St. Michael, and consists of nave, short North aisle, porch and chancel. It is principally built of sandstone and flint (rough cast), in the Early English style of architecture. The font is very ancient. The painted glass is well and richly executed, and deserves particular notice. The roofs are of stained deal. The windows are square-headed, with sunk spandrels; two are glazed with painted

glass, as memorial windows to the late Lords of the Manor of Taunton Deane, Messrs. Southwood and Mattock. There is a small and neat harmonium. The church contains a monument to the Gale family. The tower is at the West end, and has a peal of four bells.

The living is a rectory, of the annual value in 1836 of £111, now of £150, in the gift of the Rev. H. T. Tucker, M.A., of St. John's College, Oxford, who is the present rector, and lives at Leigh Court adjoining (which is a beautiful residence, erected by that gentleman about twenty years ago; the porch, entrance-hall and staircase, are very handsome).

The churchyard contains some fine trees, several old monuments and headstones.

Angersleigh lies at the foot of the Blackdown range, on the series of new red sandstone rocks, the green sand being to the West. The soil varies, but produces chiefly wheat and oats. Turnips and other roots are also grown abundantly. There are a few acres of common land on the hill. During some heavy storms some years ago it was curious to observe the effect of the accumulated waters upon the numerous flints. The rain actually washed down not only soil, sand and pebbles, but flints and stones of considerable size.

The chief landowners are Robert Mattock, Esq., the Rector, and R. C. Pearce, Esq.

The principal seats are Leigh Court, occupied by the Rector; Lowton House, the residence of Robert Mattock, Esq., is adjoining, although it is really in the parish of Pitminster.

The neighbourhood is noted for the beauty of the scenery. On the higher or Western side extensive views of the vale of Taunton Deane can be obtained.

Angerleigh is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane, Magisterial Division and County Court District of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. It is in the highway district, and the new polling-place is at Taunton.

Nearest money-order office at Wellington.

Letters arrive from Wellington at 8 30 a.m.

Nearest railway stations, Wellington and Taunton.


Angerleigh is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton, and Diocese of Bath and Wells.

In 1836 the average annual poor-rate was £43. The rateable value in 1867 was £762, the county rate £762.

The area of the parish is 403 acres.

The population in 1831 was 64; in 1861 it was 30!

## Ashbrittle

S a large parish and pleasant village, situated seven miles North of Wellington Station, 14 East of Taunton, ten miles South-East of Tiverton, and 17 from Bampton. It was formerly called Aisse, and derives its second name from a family named Bretch. At the time of the Norman Survey, by William I., it was thus described—"Bretel holds of the Earl Aisse. Wado held it in the time of King Edward. . . . There are two mills, of fifteen shillings rent. It was and is worth one hundred shillings."

The Manor passed into the possession of the Sydenhams, Chalcoats, Holcombs, Blewets, Bassets, Nutcombes and Rowcliffes, &c.

The following hamlets or places are also in this parish:—Greenham, two miles to the East; Dobles Barrow, one mile from the church; and Trace Bridge, a romantic little spot on the river Tone. Ashbrittle is on the main road between Wellington and Bampton, and possesses a fine open village green.

The church is a spacious edifice, dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. It consists of nave, North aisle and chancel, rebuilt by the present rector a few years ago. It is principally erected of stone, in the Gothic style, and is considered to have undergone various alterations at different times. The pulpit is of stone, lately erected, and deserves particular notice. The seats require restoration. The East window is handsome (by Wailes); subject, the Raising of

Lazarus. A new window, of extraordinary size, has lately been fixed in the South side. It is said to be a copy of the old one. Some of the seats are free. The church contains a very ugly monument of the Stevens' family. The chancel presents an effective appearance; the carving is rich. The oak stalls are good. The floor is of mosaic. The tower is a small, plain, square building. It has a clock, and a peal of six bells. The views from the top are very fine, commanding extensive prospects of Devon and Somerset; in fact, this parish may be said to be celebrated for the beautiful views.

"There was an eloquence in all  
The sylvan pomp of woods, the golden sun,  
The flowers, the leaves, the river on its way,  
Blue skies and silver clouds, and gentle winds,  
The swelling upland, where the sidelong sun  
Aslant the wooded slope at evening goes."

*Thompson.*

The living is a rectory, of the annual value of four hundred and twenty pounds, in the gift of John Quick, Esq. The Reverend Charles P. Quick, B.A., is the present rector.

The tithe commutation, with residence and eight acres of land, are owned by John Quick, Esq.

Adjoining is a National School for boys and girls, supported by the rector.

Humphrey Sydenham, a noted preacher, was some time rector of this parish.

The churchyard is a fine and open spot. It contains a

portion of a small cross ; also monuments to the memory of the Hellard, Morse, Sayer, Howse, Stevens and White families.

There is a chapel of ease, named Saint Peter's, near Tremlett House, built in 1860 by the rector, the land being given by T. E. Clarke, Esq., of Tremlett House.

There is also a Sunday-school here.

This church, built by Mr. Davis, of Taunton, is a pretty little building, with apse end. It is fitted with moveable benches. The chancel is neatly floored with encaustic tiles, and has a stained glass window. It is used as a schoolroom during the week. There is a harmonium. The tower has a bell-turret and small spire. The church stands adjoining the river Tone, which here is but a small brook, although occasionally swollen to a torrent.

Greenham House was formerly the seat of a family called Greenham. Mr. Parker explains that the arches of entrance were of the fourteenth century ; the window over was also of the same date. It appeared to him that parts of the house had been rebuilt about the time of Henry VIII. In the servants' apartments was a window of Richard II.'s time, and it was probably then that the house was founded. It was doubtless much larger than now. The owner of this house was always Lord of the Hundred of Milverton, and this fact showed that the former owners were important men.

The Manor House of Cotehaye is commonly known as Cotehaye Abbey. It is a perfect residence of the 8th Henry's reign, without alteration. It was, no doubt, at one time much larger, the left hand wing of the gatehouse and one of the arches of the gate having been removed. In what is now the parlour is a fine mantelpiece of the time of James II. ; and the room, although built at the same time as the rest of the building, was probably altered in that reign. Barton is a fine old building, with a capital and large porch, and handsome window and excellent pointed arches. It is said to have an underground communication with the abbey at Cothay,

nearly a mile off, in an Easterly direction. The out-buildings of Cothay are all of mediæval character, and in tolerably good preservation. There is an old coat of arms near the front door.

The soil of Ashbrittle is slaty, and produces chiefly wheat, barley and oats. The parish is situated on a small branch of the carbonaceous series of rocks, and almost the only portion in "the valley of the Tone" containing any portion of the coal measure.

Charles Rowcliffe, Esq., is Lord of the Manor.

A fair is held on the Monday before the last Tuesday in February.

The river Tone runs through the parish.

The hills are numerous ; in fact, the country appears to be nearly all hill and dale.

The scenery around is very delightful.

The chief landowners are T. E. Clarke, Esq., and — Rowcliffe, Esq.

The principal seat is Tremlett House, formerly occupied by T. E. Clarke, Esq., J.P., an old family residence, surrounded by the river Tone.

The new Devon and Somerset Railway will pass through this parish.

Ashbrittle is in the Hundred of Milverton ; in the magisterial division and County Court district of Wellington ; and returns one guardian to the Wellington Union.

The new polling-place is at Wellington.

Letters arrive from Wellington at 10.30 a.m. ; may be posted at Ashbrittle until 2.30.

Nearest railway-station at present is Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter line.

Ashbrittle is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton, in the diocese of Bath and Wells.

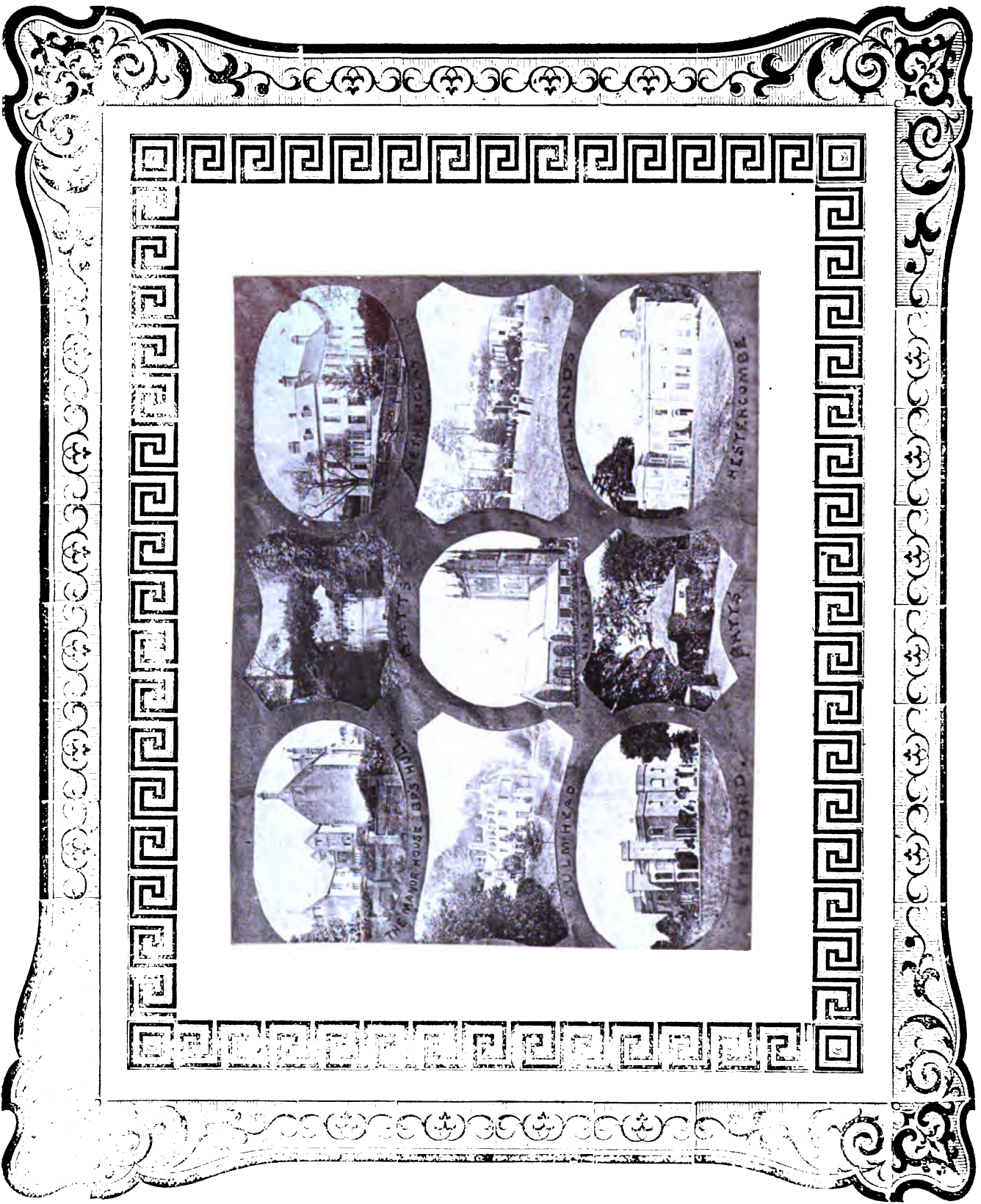
In 1836 it was rated at £312 per year.

Its area is 2,489 acres.

The population in 1831 was 579. In 1861 it was 525.







## Bishop's Hull



**S** a large and important parish and village, situated one and a half miles West of Taunton, and five and a half North-east of Wellington. It was formerly called Hilla, Hulle, or Hill-Bishop's, and probably derives its name from its position on a hill, and the Manor being the property of the Bishops of Winchester. In the Norman Survey, by William I., there is no separate account of this Manor; but reference is made to Hele, which adjoins it. The Manor of Bishop's Hull was subject to the customs of Taunton Deane.

Tangier, in this parish, is a populous district on the Western side of the borough of Taunton. It derived its name from having been the quarters of a regiment returned from Tangier, in Africa, during the siege of Taunton.

The following hamlets or places are also in this parish:—Rumwell, on the Wellington-road; Fidick, or Fyd-oak; a mill North-west of the church (where until a few years since was a rope bridge over the Tone); also Upcott, adjoining.

The main road from Bristol to Exeter through Taunton formerly passed through this village, but a shorter route, called the "new road," was cut about 25 years ago, leaving Bishop's Hull on the North.

At Castleman's Farm, Rumwell, is shown the bedstead in which the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth slept the night before the battle of Sedgemoor.

The church was formerly a fine old building, and was dedicated to St. Peter; but "modern architecture" has greatly disfigured it. The following remarks will therefore be understood to apply only to that portion of the original building which still exists, and not to those parts added in the year 1828. It now consists of chancel, with transept on each side, and small portion of the North aisle, in which is placed the organ. The old church is principally built of grey sand-stone, in the pointed Gothic style of architecture. The altar screen is panelled, with the remains of the bench-ends. The few bench-ends left are well carved, and deserve particular notice. The font is handsome and massive. The pulpit appears to have been constructed from some old carvings, and is placed upon a

modern stone base. Some of the windows contain good tracery; but others are square-headed, apparently of a later date. The East window of the chancel contains some showy painted glass. The church was enlarged in the year 1828, when a wing or nave was added, of which all we have to say is, that the quicker it is taken down and the original building restored, the sooner an eyesore will be removed from a wealthy and populous parish. The church contains monuments to the memory of the following families:—Fowell, Seymour, Collis, Dance, Kerstman, Snowden, Codrington, Darch, Shapland, Shelley, Brune, Barttelot, Gunston, Maclean. It also contains a large monument to the memory of Sir George Farewell, dated 1650. Dr. Crotch, late Professor of Music in the University of Oxford, was interred here about 20 years ago. There are no brasses, and very little stained glass. In the North wall of the chancel is a fine tomb of red and white marble, with an effigy of a doctor of laws. The tower is octagonal in shape. Tradition says it was so built by weavers, who were formerly very numerous in the parish. It has a clock and a peal of five bells. The chancel has some open stalls, and an ornamental reading-desk. The chapel of Bishop's Hull formerly belonged to the Monastery of Taunton, and having come into the hands of the Crown at the general dissolution of monasteries, was granted by Queen Elizabeth, together with divers rectories and advowsons, by letters patent, in the 23rd year of her reign (a copy whereof is in the possession of R. M. King, Esq.), to Edmund Downynge and Peter Ayshton, subject to the payment of certain yearly sums therein specified for rents, pensions and stipends. The grant describes the chapel to have been formerly demised to one Richard Farewell, to the memory of some members of whose family, it appears by Collinson's history, handsome monuments were erected in the church. The parish register dates from A.D. 1650. The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £300, with residence, in the gift of, and held by, the Rev. W. P. Williams, B.A., of Lincoln College, Oxford. Exton says that the gift of the appropriate tithes formerly belonged to the Prior of Taunton.

There are National and Sunday-schools. The school buildings are situated at the bottom of Shutewater-hill. They were erected of soft grey sandstone about twenty years ago.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of the Bryant, Walter, Hine, Tytherleigh, Hartnell, Bucknell, Howell, Price, Vanzanat, Collis, Turner, Haakole, Williams and Tucker families.

The Taunton and Bishop's Hull Cemetery is in this parish. It is beautifully laid out, nicely kept, and is a credit to the neighbourhood. It was formed about 12 years ago.

The charities are worth £60 yearly.

The Independents have a large chapel at the Western end of the village.

A Monastery of the Carmelites formerly stood near Risdon House, either in or adjoining this parish.

Bishop's Hull is situated on the new red sandstone, except that portion which adjoins the river, which is on the alluvial. The soil is rich and good, and crops of nearly all the usual agricultural produce are raised. There were quarries of a soft sandstone at Rumwell, but they are not now worked. Clay and marl is also dug here. There are brickyards on the new road. The manor was parcel of the 54 hides of Taunton, and held by the Bishops of Winchester. The neighbourhood of Bishop's Hull is a favourite resort of Tauntonians, who delight in the many shady walks.

"O happy hills! O pleasing shade!  
O fields below'd in vain!  
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,  
A stranger yet to pain!"

The river Tone waters this parish, and on this river are several capital corn-mills. There was formerly one at Roughmoor.

The Taunton and Tiverton Canal ran through this neighbourhood, but has now been destroyed.

Taunton Castle stands in this parish (full particulars of which will be found in the history of Taunton.)

The chief landowners are Maclean, Walter, Bryant, Tomlin, Pitman, Pring, England, &c.

The principal seats are Court House, lately occupied by

Samuel Pitman, Esq., J.P., a fine old Elizabethan building, said to have been erected by Sir G. Farewell in 1538, and it is considered that it formerly served as the Manor House for the General Court Baron of Taunton Deane; Upcott House, W. Gunston Maclean, Esq.; Barr House, — Matthews, Esq.; Bishop's Hull House, Capt. Patton; Netherclay House, Capt. Malet; Oldbury Lodge, Rev. W. Walter; Roughmoor, G. Rogers, Esq.; Milligan Hall, — Byne, Esq.; Frethay House, Capt. Adair; Rumwell House, Capt. Tomlin; Rumwell Hill, Mrs. Petton.

The Gunstons were an ancient family in this parish, and built an extra pew and chapel to the church, and keep the same in repair to this day.

The parish extends into the town of Taunton, a considerable portion of the Western part of the borough, including the Castle Green and Tangier, being in this parish.

At "Stonegallows," on Rumwell-hill, were hung (about fifty years ago) nine men for riots in "the West Countie."

In a field near cannon-balls have been found, said to have been thrown here at the siege of Taunton.

Bishop's Hull is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane. In the Magisterial Division and County Court district of Taunton. Returns two guardians to the Taunton Union. It is in the highway district, and the new polling-place is at Taunton. In 1836 it contained 38 electors.

The nearest money-order office is at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 7.30 a.m. May be posted at Bishop's Hull until 5.30 p.m.

Nearest railway-station, Taunton, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway.

Bishop's Hull is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton. In the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

In 1836 the average amount of poor-rate was £476. In 1867 the rateable value was £9,554; the county-rate £9,472. Its area is 1,300 acres.

The population in 1831 was 928; in 1836 it was 1,155; in 1861 it was 1,614, of which number 769 are in the borough of Taunton.

## Brompton Ralph,



**H**ILLY parish and healthy village, situated 10 miles North-West of Taunton and 4 miles North of Wiveliscombe. It was formerly called Brunantun, or Burnetown, and derives its second name from Ralph Fitz-Urse, who lived in the reign of Henry III. In A.D. 729 Fridogitha, Queen of the West Saxons, gave this manor to the church of Glastonbury. When William the Conqueror took possession of it he gave it to Sir William De Mohun, of Dunster Castle. At the time of the Norman survey it was thus described in Domesday-book:—"Turgis holds of William Burnetone; Brietric held it in the time of King Edward. . . . When he received it it was worth forty shillings, now four pounds."

The village lies at the Eastern end of Brendon Hill, in a woody country, full of hills and narrow vales, or glens, luxuriantly watered. The air is esteemed remarkably salubrious, and the pasturage so fine that sheep prosper unusually well.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Burton, half-a-mile to the North; and Rooksmast, one mile North-West.

The church is an old stone building, dedicated to St. Mary, and consists of nave, tower, North aisle and chancel. It was nearly rebuilt in A.D. 1738. The font is small. The North aisle and arcade were added about twenty years ago. The chancel-screen is in good preservation; and deserves particular notice. The pulpit is octagonal. The floor is of encaustic tile, and was laid in the year 1886. The windows are mostly debased. The old oak benches are worth attention, and are principally original. The church was enlarged in 1847, when 72 extra free seats were gained. The whole number previously was 186, of which 50 were free. The walls of the chancel have spread considerably, and have been tied with iron rods. The church contains monuments of the Sweet, Escott, Henderson and Camplin families. There is a small harmonium. There are no brasses or stained-glass, except a memorial window to the Toms family. The tower is an old stone edifice, battlemented, and with

a peal of four bells. The tower arch is very heavy in appearance. The parish register dates from A.D. 1557. Mary Stevens left the interest of £50 to the second poor. It is now given to newly-married couples. The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £410, with residence and 106 acres of land, in the gift of John Blomart, Esq., of Elworthy, and is held by the Rev. Robert Henderson, M.A., of Trinity College, Dublin. The new rectory is in the Gothic style, and was erected in the year 1863, on a fine commanding site. There are schools near the church. The churchyard, which is large, contains some fine ash trees, the remains of an old cross, and monuments to the memory of members of the following families:—Henderson, Burston, Burcher, Chilcott, Blackmoor, Dibble, Winter, Toms, Brewer, Langdon, Gibbs and Taylor.

Many of the roads are cut through the rocks of slate, and present a strange appearance.

There is a Dissenting chapel in the village. Brompton Ralph stands upon the Devonian series, with beds of lias intermixed. The soil is rocky and slaty, and produces chiefly wheat, barley and oats. Formerly the crops and manure were carried on the backs of horses, the country being so hilly. There are quarries of rag and slate stone. The Manor House is to the North-West of the church, and is occupied by the curate. A court was formerly held here. There is no revel or fair.

The river Tone rises near this parish, and runs for a few miles down a beautiful valley.

Adjoining Brompton Ralph are the remains of an encampment, supposed to be Roman.

The chief landowners are the Sweet, Escott and Blomart families.

Lord Portman is the Lord of the Manor.

The high road from Wiveliscombe to Watchet passes this village.

Brompton Ralph is in the hundred of Williton and Fremanors. In the magisterial division of Milverton. County Court district of Williton. Returns one guardian to the Williton Union. It is in the highway district, and the polling-place is at Williton.



The nearest money-order office is at Wiveliscombe. Letters arrive from Wiveliscombe at 9 a.m. May be posted at Brompton until 4.30.

Nearest railway-station, Crowcombe Heathfield, on the West Somerset line.

A carrier calls and leaves for Wiveliscombe every day. Brompton Ralph is in the Deanery of Dunster and Archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese of Bath and Wells. In 1836 the annual amount of poor-rate was £237. The population in 1831 was 449.

## Bishop's Lydeard



IS a large parish and populous village, situated five miles North-West of Taunton, one hundred and fifty-one miles West of London, eight miles West of Wellington and thirty-one miles East of Exeter. It was formerly called Lidiart, Lidegar, or Lydiard Episcopi, and is said to derive its name from the British word Lledyard, from the verb Llediana, to grow wide. It is thus described by Collinson :—"This district may boast of great antiquity. There is within its precincts a place called Conquest, or Conquest Farm, near which, in the year 1666, a very large urn was dug up by a labouring person, containing no less than fourscore pounds weight of Roman coins, of the Emperors Claudius, Nero, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, Antonine, Septimius-Severus, Tacitus, Gallienus, Tetricus, and a great number of others. Another urn, of nearly equal weight, was about the same time found in the parish of Stogumber. From the circumstance of these discoveries, the different ages of the coins, the immenseness of their quantity, and particularly the name of the place Conquest, near which they were found, a writer, whose researches are rather more curious than critical, has in a long treatise endeavoured to prove that in some place of the valley, which extends from the West side of Quantock, from Taunton to Lydiard, Stogumber and Watchet, the Romans completed the conquest of so much of Britain as is now called England, and that they, throughout many ages afterwards, continued a legion or part of one here, which they paid with such money as this, to prevent insurrection by land and invasion by sea. The common tradition, however, is that Conquest had its name from a signal victory obtained there over the Danes by

the Saxons, under the command of King Alfred; which may have been the case, although the other, likewise, may be strictly true. Certain it is that King Alfred at that period possessed all the lands of Lydiard; and when he emerged from the troubles in which the Danes had involved him, and began to advert to the concerns of domestic life, he gave this manor, with those of Wellington and Buckland, to Asser, the preceptor of his children, as a reward for his care over them. But a short time after, the same disposal which attended Wellington attended this manor also; and the first bishops of Wells became possessed of this large and valuable territory."

Bishop's Lydeard was formerly a town of some importance. It is well situated, and is a place of considerable antiquity. The following hamlets or places are in this parish :—East Coombe, Ash, East Bagborough, Hill, East Lydeard and Punchardon. The scenery around the village is very beautiful; the South side especially has all the appearance of a well-wooded park.

The church is a very handsome, lofty edifice, dedicated to Saint Mary. It consists of a fine nave, North and South aisles, porch and chancel; there is a transept attached on each side of the chancel. The church is principally built of Lydeard red sandstone, in the Gothic style of architecture, of the Perpendicular period, and is considered to have been erected in or about the reign of Henry VII. The chancel was rebuilt by the present vicar, the Rev. F. Warre, in 1860; the work was executed by Mr. Jebb, of Taunton. The font is placed at the Western entrance of the church. There is a good organ in the North transept. The chancel screen is unusually

handsome. It is gilded and illuminated, and deserves particular notice. The pulpit appears to be of the Elizabethan period. The church is rich in fine old carved oak, which has been carefully restored. The windows on the South side are all beautifully glazed with painted glass, which altogether produces a very rich effect. The tracery is mostly of the late Perpendicular period. This church was restored at a considerable cost about seven years ago, by the exertions of the present vicar. At the time of the restoration some curiosities were found. Especial attention is directed to the group in carved alabaster representing the "Ascension," now in the Museum at Taunton. Two hundred and sixty-eight of the seats are free. The tower arch is lofty and handsome. On the South door, which is ancient, is an antique lock, the case of which is above a yard in length. The church contains handsomely-painted glass windows, *in memoriam* of members of the Warre, Lethbridge, West, Smith and Weston families. The entrance to the vestry is through a deeply-recessed doorway, at the angle over which is a carved stone cherub, forming a corbel. There is a richly-crocheted niche on the North side of the chancel, and a small piscina on the South; also a brass plate to the Lethbridge family. The candelabra are of massive brass, of elegant design. There are handsome oak stalls in the chancel. In the East and South walls of the South aisle are some curious recesses, one of which has a bracket. There is a small old brass plate to Nicholas Grabham. The two doorways and staircase to the rood loft are perfect and in good preservation. The church contains monuments of the Cannon, Perriam, Farewell, Poulett, Moore, Lethbridge, Slocombe, Charter and Coles families. The chancel is divided from the transept by beautiful screens of light, open ironwork, illuminated and gilded. The tower is a very elegant, well-proportioned building, and is greatly admired. It has a clock and a peal of eight musical and well-toned bells, said to be much like Saint Mary's, of Taunton. The door leading into the tower staircase is thickly covered with plates of iron, apparently for defensive uses. Previous to the late restoration there was a small bell-cot over the East end of the nave, which received the sancte bell, and was rung on the elevation of the Host in Roman Catholic days.

The living is a vicarage, of the annual value of £240, with residence and twelve acres of glebe, in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Wells. The Rev. Francis Warre, M.A., the noted archæologist, has been for many years the vicar. Previous to 1839 the tithes had been commuted for a rent-charge of £200. The vicarage is opposite the church, on the North side.

There are schools for boys and girls, supported by voluntary contributions.

The churchyard of Bishop's Lydeard is a fine open spot, and contains monuments to the memory of the Winter, Webber, Bryant, Mills, Hamilton, Cooksley, Welsh, Hall, Warre, Ridge, Smith, Hawkins, Clarke, Coles, Burge, Poole, Marks, Halse and Fisher families; also monuments of John Daw, of Taunton, Dr. Thomas Dyke, of Tetton, Sir Rich. Grabham, Knight, and Mrs. Jemima Webber, of Dean. On the porch is a brass plate to the Searle family. Some very curious stone coffins (considered to be of great antiquity) were found near the South side of the chancel. On many of the headstones the names are obliterated, consequently the families are unknown.

There is an almshouse (endowed for ten poor people), erected by Sir Nicholas Grabham, Bart., in 1616, and increased in 1851 by Mrs. Hill. The charities are valued at about £40.

It is said that a number of soldiers were quartered in a field adjoining the village, during the civil wars of the seventeenth century, and that they used the church as an armoury.

The Independents have a neat little chapel at the Northern side of the village.

There is a flourishing Agricultural Society, which holds its meetings and distributes its prizes at the Gore Inn.

Bishop's Lydeard is situated on the new red sandstone series. The soil is clay and loam subsoil marl, and produces chiefly wheat, beans, barley, potatoes, turnips and mangold. There are a few acres of common land at Ash Common, and quarries of a splendid red sandstone near the church. Sand is also dug here.

The manor is an ancient one, formerly belonging to the West Somerset Kings, and was granted by Alfred the Great to Asser, Bishop of Sherborne. It is now divided into three different lordships.

Bishop's Lydeard and the following parishes form a division under the jurisdiction of the county magistrates:—Combe Florey, West Bagborough, Cothelstone, Lydeard St. Lawrence, Halse, Ash Priors, Heathfield and Tolland. A Court is held at the Court House the first Monday of each month.

A fair is held on the Friday before the last Saturday in March; it is principally for cattle. The West Somerset Railway passes through Lydeard; this is the first station from Taunton. A Court Leet was formerly held annually in the village.

The chief landowners are the Trustees of the late Sir Thomas Lethbridge, Bart., E. J. Esdaile, Esq., Cecil

Smith, Esq., John Winter, Esq., and Mrs. Winter. The principal seats are Sandhill, the property of Sir John Lethbridge, occupied by Lord Kensington; Cothelstone House, two miles North, the residence of E. J. Esdaile, Esq.; Lynchfield House, the residence of Mrs. Gardiner; Lydeard House, Cecil Smith, Esq.; Dean Court; Watts House, John Winter, Esq.

At the Southern side of this parish runs a clear and beautiful stream of water, which for many years was the cause of numerous law-suits between the Lethbridge and the Winter families.

The coach-road from Taunton to Minehead and West Somerset passes through this village, which tradition says was once a market town, and such seems to have been the case from the fact that there was formerly a beautiful market-cross in the village. This was removed some years since by Sir Thomas Lethbridge, and placed in the church-

yard "for security," although, as before stated, the churchyard contained a cross previously.

Bishop's Lydeard is in the Hundred of Kingsbury West and Taunton Deane, in the magisterial division of Bishop's Lydeard. In the County Court district of Taunton, and returns two guardians to the Taunton Union. It is in the highway district of Taunton, and is a polling-place for West Somerset. There is a money-order office at Bishop's Lydeard, and also a post-office savings bank. Letters arrive from Taunton at 4.30 a.m.; may be posted at Bishop's Lydeard until 8.15 p.m. The railway-station is on the Halse road. Carriers pass through the village. Bishop's Lydeard is in the Rural Deanery and in the Arch-deaconry of Taunton; in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £9,438; the county rate was £11,978. Its area is 4,686 acres. The population in 1821 was 1,016; in 1831 it was 1,295; in 1861, 1,459.

## Broomfield



is a large parish and small village, situated five miles North of Taunton, seven miles South-west of Bridgwater; on the South side of the Quantock ridge. It was formerly called Brunfelle, and probably derives its present name from the large quantities of broom in the fields, hedges and commons.

At the time of the Norman survey, by William I., it was thus described:—"William himself holds Brunfelle; Alnod held it at the time of King Edward . . . When he received it it was worth forty shillings, now sixty shillings." The William referred to is William de Bohum, of Dunster.

The Cross family settled here as early as A.D. 1634.

Broomfield is beautifully varied with swelling hills and deep romantic valleys, and commands most excellent views of the vale of Taunton Deane on the South, and of Bridgwater, the Channel and the coast of Wales on the North.

"Heavens! what a goodly prospect spreads around,  
Of hills, and dales and woods, and lawns and spires,  
And glittering towns, and gilded streams, till all  
The stretching landscape into smoke decays!"

Binfords is a small hamlet belonging to Broomfield.

The parish consists mostly of scattered farms and cottages. It is noted for being remarkably healthy, even in times of general sickness.

The church is a handsome old edifice, dedicated to All Saints, and consists of nave, North aisle, porch and chancel. It is principally built of rag stone, with Hamdon Hill stone dressings, in the Perpendicular style of architecture. This church formerly was appropriated to the Priory of Buckland, and is remarkable for the beauty of its bench-ends, illustrations of which are given in a volume of the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. The windows have good tracery of the Perpendicular period. The chancel has undergone some restoration within the past few years. There was formerly an ugly buttress and wall against the East window. The church contains handsome monuments of the Towel, Hillier, Hamilton and Jeanes families; also some old stones of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The tower is low and square, with a small, curiously-alated spire, and good buttresses, and has a peal of five bells. The church has been endowed with £400 private bene-



faction and £400 royal bounty. The parish register dates from A.D. 1830. The living is a perpetual curacy of the annual value of one hundred pounds, in the gift of John Hamilton, Esq., who is the lay rector. The Rev. Nicholas Germon, M.A., of Oriel College, Oxford, is the present incumbent.

In 1836 there were 29a. 3r. 14p. of glebe land, worth twenty shillings per acre.

The great tithes are worth £400 a-year, and are owned by John Hamilton, Esq. They have been commuted for a rent-charge of £375.

The parsonage was recently erected by Jeboult, of Taunton, on the Eastern side of the church, by the aid of Queen Anne's Bounty Fund, on land presented by the late John Hamilton, Esq.

Adjoining the church are newly-erected schools for both sexes.

The churchyard contains a handsome, though mutilated, old cross and a monument to the memory of the late celebrated Andrew Crosse, the electrician. The trees around this churchyard deserve the notice of visitors, being unusual, especially in such a situation.

The annual charities are above fifty pounds.

Near "Old Mill" is a quarry which consists of argillaceous flag-stone of a purple hue. Buncombe Hill (so called from the British Ben Cwm, the Vale Head,) contains quarries of slate, laminated and of a reddish colour. There are also beds of red sand-stone, without organic remains. In a quarry adjoining have been found a small bed of lime-stone, altogether omitted from the Ordnance Map. The soil is generally shallow, and abounds with that thin rag-stone of a slaty kind so usual on the Quantocks. It is on the Devonian series, which contains a few scattered beds of lias. The produce is chiefly wheat, barley and oats. There are many acres of common land and much woodland. Spanish chestnut trees flourish, as well as fir, beech and ash. Ferns and mosses are abundant. There are numerous quarries of thin, rough rag-stone throughout the parish. Copper, iron and other ores are dug here. The hills are often beautifully covered with the flowers of the broom. Furze and purple digitalis, polypody, erica and hawkweed, also thrive well on this lovely and romantic spot.

At Roberrow, in this parish, is a hill fort and beacon, formerly in communication with those at the mouth of the Parrett, and also with those on Cothelstone and Norton Hills.

A fair is held on the 13th November for cattle, sheep, horses, etc., formerly for coarse cloths.

Broomfield is prettily watered by several small streams.

Charcoal is manufactured on the Quantock Hills in small quantities. Mining operations have been carried on at Broomfield. The ore obtained was a rich yellow sulphuret, associated with quartz and grauwacke. Specimens of the ore found on the hills may be seen at the Museum of the Somersetshire Archæological Society at Taunton.

The celebrated Andrew Crosse says:—"Holwell Cavern is a fissure in a limestone rock, situated at the North-west side of the parish of Broomfield. This rock has been quarried for several years, and is perfectly free from organic remains; but occasionally cubes of sulphuret of iron are found embedded within it. There is a difference of opinion as to the kind of limestone of which it is composed. Some geologists have determined it to be mountain limestone. The mass of it is of the transition kind, but containing some veins of bituminous limestone. In the immediate vicinity, and to a certain extent within the cavern, are strata of clay slate, which come into contact with the lime-rock which lies at the foot and Eastern side of the grauwacke of the Quantock Hills, upon which it rests. The length of the fissure, as far as it has been examined, is 127 feet; and it is from three and a half feet to twenty in breadth, and from five to upwards of twenty in height. Its direction is from East to West, and it is entered at the Eastern end. There are some other smaller fissures on the North side of the main one, running nearly at right angles to it. At the extreme Western end of this cavern is a small pool of water, supplied by a little spring which percolates the rock and passes off through the bottom of the pool. The entrance into the cave has its roof and sides covered with stalactitic carbonate of lime, and you descend several steps, which have been hewn in the rock to allow a better ingress; and the main fissure has likewise been widened artificially for the same purpose. The roof and sides of the Western end are more or less covered with snow-white crystals of arragonite, in great variety—massive with fibrous crystals diverging from a centre—coralliform, composed of aggregations of diverging crystals (*flor ferri*), mostly translucent, rarely transparent—the colour varying from a snowy white to pale red, but mostly the former. These crystals readily scratch common carbonate of lime, and even glass, but with some difficulty. Water is constantly dropping from the projections of the roof at the Western end, and the arragonite would be slowly increasing were it not for the depredations committed on it for some time past by collectors of specimens, who, not contented with fracturing it in all directions, have partially blackened the roof by the smoke of candles. Very large stalactites and stalagmites also have been removed, so that the cavern presents a very different

appearance from what it originally did when first discovered."

In summer the hills are delightful, and are abundantly covered with many wild flowers, besides those already named. A graphic modern writer on this subject says—"He knows no better place in the West of England for specimens."

The chief landowners are John Hamilton, Esq., — Mayo, Esq., Colonel Tynte, Lord Portman, Miss Warre, — Herbert, Esq., and Langley St. Aubyn, Esq.

The principal seats are Fyne Court, the property and residence of John Hamilton, Esq.; Broomfield Hall; and Holmes Hill, occupied by Miss King. The parish is also noted for having for many years been the residence of the late celebrated Andrew Crosse, of Fyne Court. He fitted up an excellent laboratory, powerful electrical machines and galvanic batteries. While he was living here he caused iron wires to be suspended around his park, so that he could always ascertain the electrical condition of the

atmosphere, the wire being connected with a conductor in his laboratory. His "Life" was written by his widow, and contains many interesting particulars and local anecdotes. His museum contained a valuable and extensive collection of the mineral productions of this county.

Broomfield is in the hundred of Andersfield. It is in the magisterial division and County Court district of Bridgwater. New polling-place Bridgwater, and returns one guardian to the Bridgwater Union. It is in the highway district of Bridgwater. The nearest money-order office is at Taunton. Letters arrive from Bridgwater at 10.15 a.m.; may be posted at Broomfield until 4 p.m. The nearest railway-station is at Taunton, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway. There is no regular carrier. Broomfield is in the deanery of Bridgwater, in the archdeaconry of Taunton, and the diocese of Bath and Wells. Its area is 4,274 acres. The population in 1791 was 330. In 1821, 489; and in 1861, it was 525. Assessed to county rate, £4,000.

## Bathelton



S a pleasant parish and small village, situated eleven miles West of Taunton, five miles North-West of Wellington station, one hundred and seventy-four from London, and two and a quarter South of Wiveliscombe.

It was formerly called Badialton, or Bادهل-tone, and probably its name is derived from some connection with the Tone, although many think from the Bathelton family; but whether the family took its name from the village or the village from the family is not certain. The former seems most probable, as it occurs first.

At the time of the Norman Survey by William I., it was thus described:—"Nigel holds of William Bادهل-tone; two thanes held it in the time of King Edward. . . . It was formerly worth twenty shillings, now fifty shillings."

This was one of the manors presented by the Conqueror to his faithful follower, Sir William de Mohun,

lord of Dunster Castle, in whose family it remained many years. In the 12th year of the reign of Henry II. it belonged to the Bathaelston family. It afterwards passed to the Hillerys, and then to the Sydenhams and Webbers.

The church is a beautiful and chaste edifice, dedicated to Saint Bartholomew. It consists of nave, North aisle and chancel. It was built of stone, in the Gothic style, in 1854. The fittings are neat and in good taste. There is a small organ. The church contains monuments of the Webber family, who were for many ages principal proprietors in this parish, also of the Clarkes, and Havilands, and Sharps. Emanuel Sharp was for some time vicar of St. Mary's, Taunton. The tower is also new, with a small spire, and has a peal of four bells, removed from the old church. The following is an extract from Collinson, and is the whole description he gives of the former church of this parish:—"It is a small structure, but very neatly ornamented, having a most elegant altar-

piece, consisting of a rich cornice and capital, supported by four fluted Corinthian pillars, the edges and tops of the foliage in the capitals being gilt. Between these are three arched panels. In the centre one a most elegant oval glory, wrought in gold and silver tissue. The side panels contain texts of Scripture. The communion-table and railing are mahogany." After this flourish about this lath and plaster Pagan altar nothing further is mentioned respecting the church, so the reader is left to his imagination.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £300, arising from forty-six acres of glebe and tithes, with residence, in the gift of and held by the Rev. E. A. Webber, of St. John's College, who resides at Runnington.

Adjoining are parochial schools for boys and girls, also a Sunday-school.

The charities are £2 yearly.

Bathealton is situated on the Devonian series, and on the new red sandstone. The soil is clay loam and sand, the subsoil rock, and produces chiefly wheat, barley and turnips. The soil in many parts is shallow, and occasionally after heavy rain is to be found washed into the roads or adjoining fields in considerable quantities.

Bathealton is beautifully seated in a luxuriantly wooded and watered country; the scenery around is very

delightful; the vegetation, the mosses, the wild flowers, the ferns and the views will strike the attention of a visitor, and teach him, if he has a soul, "to look from Nature up to Nature's God."

The river Tone runs through the parish.

The chief landowners are Lord Ashburton, R. C. Pearce, Esq., the rector, and H. G. Moysey, Esq.

The principal seats are Bathealton Court, the residence of H. G. Moysey, Esq., J.P.; and Balbrooke House, John Terry, Esq.

This parish is also noted for an ancient encampment, of a circular shape, of about ten acres in extent. The fosse is nearly entire. Roman coins have been found here. It lies about one mile to the West of the church.

The Barnstaple and Taunton line will run through this parish.

Bathealton is in the Hundred of Milverton. County Court district of Wellington. Returns one guardian to the Wellington Union. Nearest money-order office at Wiveliscombe. Letters arrive from Wellington at 9 a.m. May be posted at Bathealton until 3.30. Nearest railway-station Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter line. It is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 941 acres. The population in 1831 was 105; in 1851 it was 118; in 1861 it was 135.

## Bagborough.



BAGBOROUGH is a pleasant parish and village, situated  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles North-West of Taunton and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles North of Bishop's Lydeard railway-station. It was formerly called Bageberge. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"William himself holds Bageberge. Leurie held it in the time of King Edward. . . . It was and is worth one hundred shillings."

It passed through the families of the De Memburys, Taverners, Brookes, Tanfields, Says and Stawels.

The manor was subject to the same customs as that of

Taunton Deane, except that its tenants were exempt from the wars and their attendance on the Lord's funeral.

The hills around this parish wave into beautiful swells and hollows, with wood and common, on which may be found in quantities the purple erica and other similar wild plants.

Bagborough lies on a graceful slope of the Quantock hills, facing the South; the highest point, 1,270 feet high, is in this parish. The views are very extensive.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—East Bagborough, Tirhill (with park), Triscombe, Stockham, Westwood and Boxenhood.

The village street, instead of presenting a pretty rural aspect, has every appearance of being a dirty slum of a neglected city, and reflects disgrace upon the owners, although it is beautifully situated in a most lovely country, and deserves better attention.

The church is a lofty edifice, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and consists of nave, North aisle (erected in 1839), porch and chancel. The chancel greatly needs restoration. It is principally built of native red sandstone, in the various styles of Gothic architecture. Over the porch may yet be seen the ancient sun-dial, once so common on all churches. The South porch is unusually large, with a bold front arch. The carved bench-ends are good, and deserve particular notice. The pulpit is unworthy the church. The windows are generally very inferior, few of the original ones being visible. This church has undergone little change since the time it was altered in 1839. Most of the seats are free. On the North side of the chancel is a brass plate to the memory of Edward Kellett. It is fixed in a large block of polished marble, or granite, and is called "the altar stone." The church contains handsome monuments of the Popham family; also of members of the Shouldham and Elford families. There is an old piscina. There are two brasses of the Popham family, but no stained glass. A small harmonium is in use. The tower is embattled. It is a massive building, with a North turret, and is surrounded with lofty trees. It has a peal of six bells, which have lately been newly hung.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £550, with residence and 73 acres of glebe, in the gift of and held by the Rev. John B. Riky, M.A. The rectory is a good building.

There are schools for boys and girls.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of members of the following families:—Popham, Webber,

Morle, Fearncombe, Steevens, Morris, Chorley, Dibble, Howe, Gibbs, Street, Witheyman and Temlett.

There are several charities, worth upwards of £20 a-year, annually distributed on Easter Monday.

Bagborough lies on the junction of the Devonian series of rocks, with that of the new red sandstone. The soil is various, being partly clay and partly rich loam; the sub-soil sand and marl. There are numerous quarries of coarse red sandstone. Red sand is also dug here.

M. F. Bissett, Esq., is Lord of the Manor.

Bagborough is delightfully situated on the escarpment of the Quantocks; the views are magnificent.

A Court was formerly held on the 23rd May, but has ceased for many years.

The hills are numerous and steep, and the roads rough and deep.

The chief landowners are M. F. Bissett, Esq., and Messrs. Pollard, Morle, Dibble, &c.

The only seat is Bagborough House, the beautiful residence of Mr. Bissett.

A fire occurred here a short time since, and destroyed considerable property in the village.

Bagborough is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane. Magisterial division of Bishop's Lydeard. County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. Taunton highway district. The new polling-place is at Bishop's Lydeard. The nearest money-order office at Bishop's Lydeard. Letters arrive from Taunton at 7.35 a.m.; may be posted at Bagborough until 7.30. Nearest railway-station, Bishop's Lydeard, on the West Somerset Railway. Bagborough is in the Deanery and the Archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £2,711; the county rate £2,732. Its area is 1,850 acres; reported as 1,971 acres in 1836. The population in 1821 was 421; in 1831, 453; in 1861, 495.

## Bradford



IS a pleasant parish and village, situated four miles West of Taunton, three and a half miles North-East of Wellington, and twenty-seven miles from Exeter. It was formerly called Bradeforde, and is considered to derive its name from having been the *Broad Ford* of the River Tone. At the time of the Norman Survey, by William I., it was thus described:—"Alured holds of the Earl Bradeforde. Edwin held it in the time of King Edward. . . . There is a mill of ten shillings rent, and thirty acres of meadow, and ten acres of pasture, and seventy-two acres of wood. It was worth eight pounds, now eleven pounds." It was subject to the customs of Taunton Deane. The manor passed into the hands of the De Montacutes, then into those of the Meriets, of Combe Florey, and from them to the Warres of Hestercombe, Clarkes, Burridges, &c., &c.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Ford, an ancient tithing; Hele, one mile and a quarter from the church, and Stoford, near Buckland.

Bradford is situated in a beautiful neighbourhood, and is well wooded. The situation, though low, is picturesque. This parish (in connection with those adjacent) possesses a flourishing agricultural association.

In the reign of Henry III. William De Forde was Lord of the Manor of Forde, in this parish.

The church is a fine old handsome edifice, dedicated to St. Giles, and consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch, chancel and new vestry. There was formerly a chantry attached, of which the last incumbent had a pension of five pounds per year. The church is principally built of a hard sandstone, in the Early Perpendicular style of architecture, and is considered to have been altered in or about the fourteenth century. Part of the nave and chancel are Early English, with alterations of a later date. The font is new; the old one is placed in the vestry. In an ancient recess in the South wall is a stone lay-figure, said to be that of the founder of the church, and it deserves particular notice. The lessons are read from a finely-carved eagle. The pulpit is in the Italian style, and is a fine work of art.

It was formerly in St. Mary's Church, Taunton, and was removed, not being considered suitable for a Gothic building, and is for the same reason out of place at Bradford. Some of the windows are richly stained, and have been erected through the exertions of the Burridge and Easton families. The East window contains the "Crucifixion." This church was restored six years ago, at a cost of about £2,000, of which the parish subscribed about £300; the remainder was paid by the late Alexander Adair, Esq., of Heatherton Park. There was formerly a rood-loft in Bradford Church; the door and part of the stairs were visible a few years ago. The organ is placed in the North transept, and has a good effect. There is a piscina, and two stoups. The church contains monuments of the Easton and Petten families. There are also modern brasses of good design to the memory of the Adair family. The tower is a fine, stone building, with a stair turret on the South side. It has a clock and a peal of five bells. It is considered similar to that of Wellington. The living is a discharged vicarage of the annual value of two hundred pounds, with residence, and twenty-eight acres of glebe land, in the patronage of and held by the Rev. H. J. Adair, M.A., of Christ Church, Oxford. The vicarage is near the church. Arrangements are in progress for the purpose of rebuilding it. Adjoining is a national school. The churchyard contains some fine trees, also monuments to the memory of the Burridge, Tulip, Pring, Collett, King, Easton, Adair, Burch, Woodruff and other families.

The Independents have a new chapel in this village.

Bradford is situated on the new red sand-stone, except that portion near the river, which is alluvium. The soil is chiefly strong clay, and produces all the usual crops of this part of the county in abundance. There are quarries of sandstone at Hele.

The turnpike road from Taunton to Exeter passes near this village, and the river Tone runs just below the church. Over the river is a fine old picturesque stone bridge, said to have been built by the monks in the thirteenth century.

The manor has been divided, and belongs to the soil

owners. A stock market is held twice a year, at Easter and November.


Hele, Bradford, and Ford corn-mills are in this parish. The chief landowners are Messrs. Adair, Easton, Burch, Sanford and Broadmead. The principal seats are Heatherton Park, the residence of Mrs. Adair, beautifully situated half a mile South of the village. At Hele are the remains of a good house, built in 1606 by the Turner family, who resided there for 170 years.

This parish is also noted for its attractions to anglers. The otter-hounds occasionally show good sport on the river. There is an excellent old Gothic bridge of three arches, at Hele, over the Tone. It is of capital construc-

tion, built, probably, in the 13th or 14th centuries. Bradford is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane. In the magisterial division and County Court district of Wellington. Returns one guardian to the Wellington union. The polling-place is at Taunton. Nearest money-order office at Taunton or Wellington. The nearest railway-stations, Wellington and Taunton.

Bradford is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton, in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. In 1836 the annual amount of poor relief was £245. The area is 1,782 acres. The population in 1831 was 525. In 1861 it was 552.

## Bickenhall

S a high and healthy parish, situated six miles South-East of Taunton, and six miles North-West of Chard. It was formerly only a hamlet of Staple Fitzpaine, but is now a reputed parish. Its old name was Bickehalle. At the time of the Norman Survey, by William I., it is thus described in Domesday Book:—"William holds of the Earl Bichehalle, Alurie held it in the time of King Edward. . . . It was worth twenty shillings, now seventy shillings."

This manor paid custom to Cari, a King's manor, five sheep with as many lambs, and every free man one pig of iron. It would therefore appear that formerly there was an iron foundry here.

The manor successively became the property of the De Paveleys, De Stapiltons, Orchards, Doddingtons and Portmans.

Extensive and beautiful views may be obtained from the high lands of this parish.

Bickenhall old church (now pulled down) was a small building, consisting of nave and chancel, fifty-two feet long by seventeen feet wide. A tower stood at the Western end, which was forty feet high. It contained but one bell. In Pigott's collection of views of Somersetshire buildings, in the Taunton Museum, is a sketch of the church of Bickenhall. It was a plain building of the Perpendicular period.

The new church is a chaste and neat little edifice, dedicated to St. Paul. It consists of nave, porch, vestry and chancel.

It is entirely built of blue lias limestone, in the Early English style of architecture, with a high pitched tiled roof and bell turret, having one bell at the Western end.

The font is handsome; it was brought from the old church.

Portions of the pulpit were also brought from the same place.

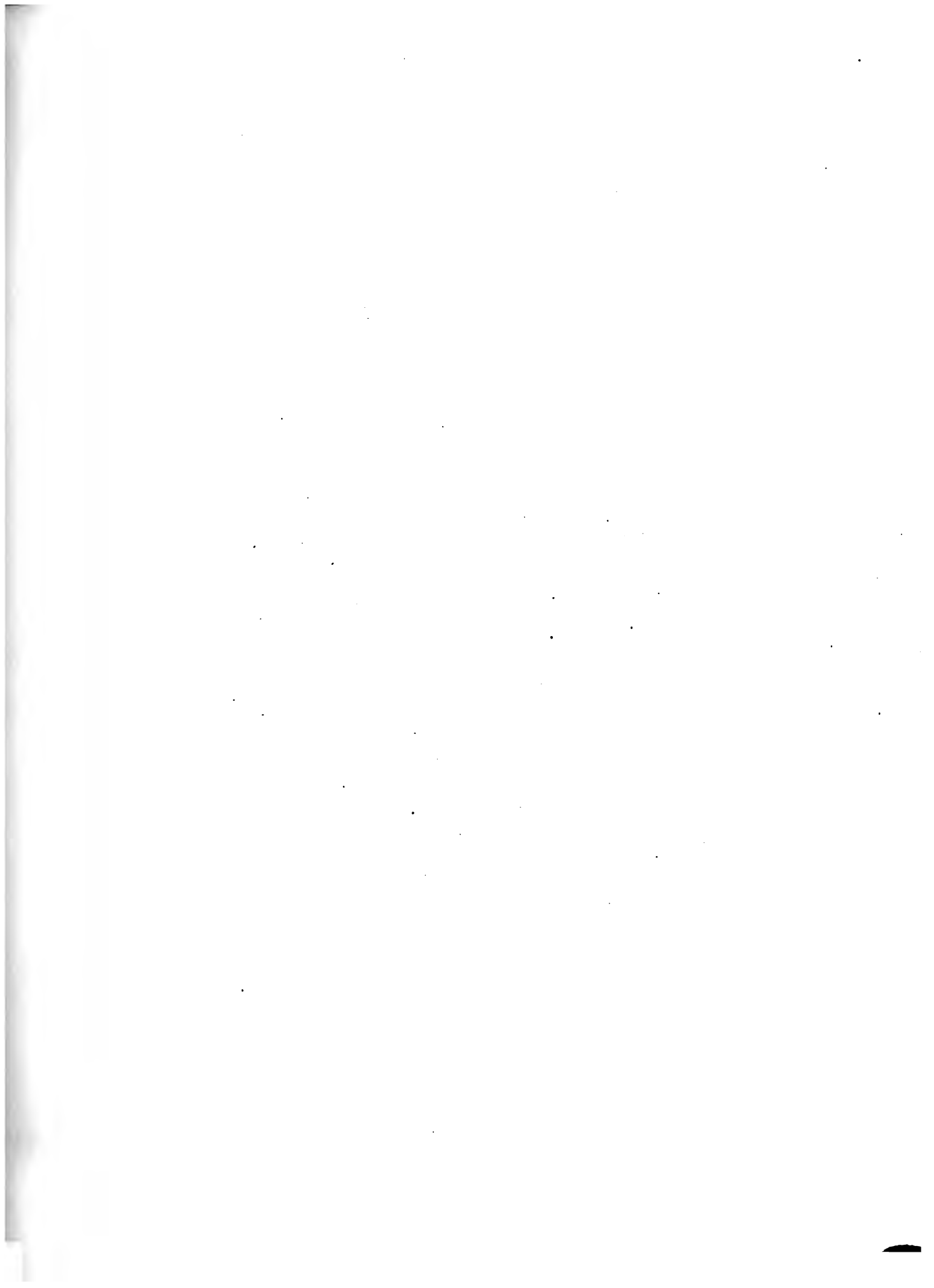
There is a neat little harmonium.

The windows of the chancel are of painted glass; the Eastern represents the crucifixion.

The church is fitted up with stained deal benches. There are two hundred sittings, of which one hundred and fifty-five are free. The old church was in the corner of the parish, near Hatch; the new was erected nearly in its centre, in A.D. 1849.

The only monument in the new church is a curious and quaint old figure of an aged female, which tradition says represents "Lady Portman." It has now no inscription. When in the old church this monument was protected by a strong iron railing, and Collinson says there was then an inscription. The only visible part was the following words, "Rachel Portman, who died in the 77th year of her age."

There are no brasses, but a small stained glass window









to the memory of a member of the Portman family. The parish register dates from 1745.

The living is a chapelry (with Staple annexed), of the annual value of two hundred pounds; joint annual value six hundred pounds, in the gift of Lord Portman.

The Rev. F. B. Portman, of All Souls College, Oxford, is the present rector of Staple Fitzpaine. The Rev. Joseph Jackson, curate, resides at the old vicarage, Staple Fitzpaine.

There are eight acres of glebe land, value twelve pounds per year.

In the new churchyard are a few memorials, including those to the memory of Bale and Lathzby.

In the old churchyard are monuments to the memory of many of the old families of the parish, including the Franklins, Grabhams, Ganges, Cozens, &c.

Rachel Portman (before mentioned) gave ten pounds to the poor, the interest to be distributed on Easter-day.

The soil is stiff clay, and produces chiefly wheat, oats and grass. Flints and sand are found here.

There are quarries of rock limestone, but not now used.

The principal landowner and Lord of the Manor is Lord Portman.

There are two tanyards in this parish. Formerly dowlas and tick were manufactured here.

The principal residents are Messrs. Cozens, Grabham and Franklin.

Bickenhall was one of the unfortunate parishes that in 1865 was placed under the ban of the cattle plague.

There was formerly a poor house here, kept in repair by the parish. It was occupied by four families, who paid a chief rent to the Lord of the Manor.

Bickenhall is in the Hundred of Abnick and Bulstone. In the magisterial division and the County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton union.

It is in the Deanery of Crewkerne, in the Archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £1,338. The county rate was £1,314. Its area is 1,004 acres. In 1791 the number of houses was twenty-nine. The population in 1831 was two hundred and seventy. In 1861 it was two hundred and twenty-nine.

## Creech St. Michael,

**A** LARGE parish and village, situate three miles North-East of Taunton and nine miles South of Bridgwater; was formerly called Crice or Cruche, and derives its name from the Saxon word denoting creek or cove. The sea formerly ran up to Creech and formed a notable creek. At the time of the Norman survey by William I. it was thus described:—"The King holds Crice; Gunnild held it at the time of King Edward. . . . There is a mill of eight-pence rent. . . . Pasture a mile in length and as much in breadth. . . . It yields nine pounds and four shillings of white money. There is a fishery, but it does not belong to the farms."

William gave the Manor of Creech to the cluniac monks of Montacute Hill. In consequence of the rebellion of the prior it was soon lost, but afterwards restored to them by King Henry I. They held it until the reign of King Henry VIII.

The parish is upwards of four miles in length from North to South. It derived its second name from that of the patron saint of its parish church.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Long-Auler, one mile North-west from the church; Edgeborough or Adsborough, anciently a place of importance, where are quarries of siliceous argillaceous slate, two and a half miles North from Creech; Charlton, one mile to the East; Ham, one mile South-east; Creech Heathfield, one mile to the North; and Little Creech.

In support of the statement that the sea formerly ran up to Creech is the fact that there is a place near the village yet known by the name of "The Shipping Moor or Harbour."

The church is an ancient and lofty edifice, dedicated to St. Michael. It consists of nave, North aisle, porch and chancel. There is a transept attached on the North-east corner, belonging to Barton Court. The church is princi-

pally built of stone—rough cast. It is in the Gothic style of architecture, of various dates and styles, and is considered to have undergone many alterations in or about the fifteenth century. It would appear that the North aisle and tower formerly composed the original church. The South aisle belonged to the family of Celey, of Charlton, and was formerly separated from the nave by a handsome screen. The "Monk's Hole," as it is called, in the North transept, is curious, and deserves particular notice. The pulpit is of a late date, and of poor construction. There is a small piscina, in the usual place. The pillar arches and the windows are of various characters and styles, and show the numerous changes that have taken place. This church was slightly altered in the year 1825, since remaining with but little change. It was formerly appropriated to the monastery of Montacute. There was at one time a screen across the chancel. One of the doors has in it two holes an inch in diameter, and another has four holes, which tradition asserts were caused by shot at the time of the wars; but we should think this very doubtful. It is said that under the whitewash on the walls are numerous texts of Scripture, and some paintings. There would probably be some letters around an ancient coat of arms in the Celey aisle. There are some fine old carved bench-ends in various parts of the church. There are many handsome canopied niches, but little or no stained glass. The building greatly needs restoration, which, if judiciously done, would make it as fine a parish church as any in this part of the county. It reflects no credit upon the inhabitants of Creech that neighbouring parishes of less wealth should be able to restore their churches, when that of Creech remains in its present neglected state. There are monuments of the Tate, Celey and Keyt families; and there are stones inscribed with the names of Raymond, Crosse, Bobbett, Celey, Moore, Pococke, Barber, Dowlin, Mattlebury, Richards and Cresswell; also a curious old tomb to the memory of Robert Cuff, of Creech, who died in 1597. The carved oak cornice of the nave is rich. The tower stands upon four handsome arches; on the North side of the church the bell-ring is well executed. There was formerly a screen across the entrance. The tower has a clock and a peal of five bells. It is plain, and battlemented, with a turret on the North side. There are two Royal arms in the church, of different dates. There was formerly a rood-loft, with turret-stairs.

The living is a vicarage, of the annual value of £380, with residence and land, in the gift of C. Cresswell, Esq., and Mrs. Cresswell, and held by the Rev. J. D. Ostrehan, of Oxford. The great tithes are owned by R. M. King, Esq., the small tithes by the Vicar. The vicarage, which is

a commodious building, is near the church. Adjoining are free schools, supported by subscription, also a Sunday-school. Over the exterior of the Western window of the nave is a well-carved stone statue of the patron saint, in a circular niche. There are also similar niches on each side of the window.

The churchyard contains a fine old yew and the parish stocks; also monuments to the memory of the Richardson, Savidge, Fawn, Dunning, Chidgey, Burge, Jacobs, Stiling, Brass, Ellis, Burd and Cresswell families.

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire—  
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

The charities are as follows:—Henry Stodgell in 1701 and Ann Seager in 1741 bequeathed two pounds rent-charge for the instruction of children.

A few years ago a weekly paper was published by the vicar of that day, the Rev. — Cresswell. It was called "The Tauntonian."

The Wesleyans have a small chapel at Creech, which is now closed; also a small Wesleyan chapel at Ham, which is partly in this parish. The Baptists have a large chapel and school.

The parish of Creech stands mostly on the alluvium, with portions on the new red sand-stone series. The soil is clay, mixed with gravel and stone rust, and produces chiefly wheat and barley.

In 1796 there were 200 acres of common land adjoining the River Tone, on which the parishioners of Ruishton had a pasturage for 999 sheep.

Elm is the principal timber.

There are quarries of "rag" stone at Edgeborough, and sand and clay are also dug throughout the parish.

William Howard, Esq., of Taunton, was Lord of the Manor. A Court is held at the Bell Inn annually, in October.

A revel is held on the first Monday after the 8th of September.

The village is situated on the River Tone, which is crossed by a good stone bridge, lately widened.

The Taunton and Bridgwater and Taunton and Chard canals run through this parish; also the Bristol and Exeter and the Chard and Taunton Railways.

Bricks and tiles are manufactured at Creech.

There are several mills in the neighbourhood; also a brewery. There were formerly some oil-mills. Adjoining the village is a windmill to pump water out of the invert on the Bristol and Exeter Railway, which otherwise in wet weather would be flooded.

Tobacco pipes are manufactured at Ham; near there is a steam-engine fixed to supply the canal with water from the River Tone.

The chief landowners are R. M. King, Esq., and Messrs. Coombe, Bond, Dunning and Richards.

In 1791 there were but 133 houses in this large parish.

Creech is in the Hundred of Andersfield, in the magisterial division and County Court district of Taunton; returns two guardians to the Taunton Union. The Highway district, the polling-place and the nearest money-

order office are at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton through Henlade at 7.30 a.m.; may be posted at Creech until 5.15. Nearest railway-station, Durston. Creech is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton; diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1836 the annual amount to the relief of the poor was £420. The rateable value in 1867 was £8,840; the county rate was £8,784. Its area in 1839 was considered to be 2,194 acres; in 1867, 2,259 acres. The population in 1791 was 600; in 1831, 812; in 1851 it was 1,116; in 1861 it was 1,121.

## Clatworthy



is a large parish and small village, situated 14 miles West of Taunton, 10 miles from Wellington railway-station, and 4 North of Wiveliscombe. It was formerly called Clateurde. The manor anciently belonged to the Abbey of Glastonbury. It is in a thinly-populated district, being quite "among the mountains." At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was seized by the Conqueror and given to his great favourite Sir William de Mohun, of Dunster Castle. Domesday Book thus describes it:—"Oyisus holds of William Clateurde . . . . . Alviot held it in the time of King Edward . . . There is a mill of 6d. rent," &c.

Clatworthy is situate on a small eminence, rising out of a deep dell, overshadowed with hanging woods.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Tripp, an ancient manor mentioned in Domesday Book; Syndercombe, also an ancient manor, one mile distant. The name is supposed to be derived from the large heaps of cinders discovered here, considered to be the refuse of the furnaces used by the Romans in smelting iron ore. Mill Town is a hamlet near the church.

The church is a plain edifice, dedicated to St. Mary, and consists of nave, large porch, small transept on the North side, and chancel. The church is principally erected of rough native stone, in the Gothic style of architecture,

and is considered to have been built in the Decorated English style of the 13th century; but some portions are Perpendicular. It was restored in 1865. The font is very ancient, and is supposed to be older than the present church. There is a neat organ. The East and West windows are very handsome, and are of stained glass. There is also a memorial window to a former rector, who held the living 46 years. The seats are open and free. The church is beautifully paved with encaustic tiles. It contains monuments of the Hay and Bernard families. There are no brasses or stained glass. In the chancel are good open stalls and a reading-desk. The tower is very plain, square and small. It has a peal of four bells. There is on the exterior of the church a stair-turret to the ancient rood-loft.

The parish register dates from "Anno Regni Elizabethæ Primo," A.D. 1558.

The living is a rectory, of the annual value of £283, with residence and 93 acres of glebe, in the gift of George H. Carew, Esq., of Crowcombe. The Rev. Warington Carew, of Trinity College, Cambridge, is the present rector.

Previous to 1836 the tithes were commuted for a rent charge of £268.

The rectory is opposite the church.

Near are National Schools for both sexes, and a Sunday-school.

Near the church was a house called the Church House, held from the Lord of the Manor for the use of the poor.

The churchyard contains a small cross and monuments to the memory of the Look, Surridge, Tyler, Ayre, Gamlin, and Purchase families.

Clatworthy is seated upon the Devonian series of rocks, intermixed with lias. In this rock are found numerous white pebbles of spar, vulgarly called white flints, or "popple stones." They are hard and durable as road stone, and are in general use for that purpose, and give a bright, clean and light appearance to the roads. The soil is light loam, the subsoil slate, and produces chiefly oats, roots and hay.

Until the last 40 years the agricultural produce and manure were carried on the backs of horses, the roads being too narrow and the hills too steep for wheeled carriages.

The iron mines on the Brendon Hills are near this village.

There is a manor house near the church.

George Carew, Esq., is Lord of the Manor.

The river Tone, soon after its rise on the Brendon Hills, runs through this parish and turns a small mill.

There is a hill called Beverton, near Rawleigh's Cross, full of springs. Here is the spot for beautiful peeps and splendid views:—

"Here along the dale,

With woods o'erhung, and shagg'd with mossy rocks,  
Whence on each hand the gushing waters play,  
And down the rough cascade white-dashing fall,  
Or gleam'd in lengthen'd vista through the trees,  
You silent steal; or sit beneath the shade  
Of solemn oaks, that tuft the swelling mounts  
Thrown graceful round by Nature's careless hand,  
And pensive listen to the various voice  
Of rural peace: the herds, the flocks, the birds,  
The hollow-whispering breeze, the plaint of rills,  
That, purling down amid the twisted roots  
Which creep around, their dewy murmurs shake  
On the sooth'd ear."

Clatworthy is in the Hundred, Magisterial Division, and County Court district of Williton. Returns one guardian to the Williton Union. The polling-place and nearest money-order office are at Wiveliscombe. Letters arrive at 9 a.m. Post leaves at 4.30 p.m. The nearest railway-station is Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter line. Clatworthy is in the Deanery of Dunster. In the Archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Previous to 1836 it was rated at £207. Its area is 2,848 acres. The population in 1831 was 280; in 1860 it was 323.

## Cheddon Fitzpaine



IS a pretty parish and village, situated two and three-quarter miles North-East of Taunton. It was formerly called Cedene, and is at present divided into upper and lower parts. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—

"Uboedene (or Upper Cheddon) and Succedene (or Lower Cheddon), and add thereto Maidenbrooke; all these places did suit and service to the Bishop's Court at Taunton, and were subject to those customs which are mentioned in that old record." Soon after the Conquest the manor passed into the hands of the Fitzpaines, who gave it its second name.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Cheddon-downs, Maidenbrooke (above referred to, formerly a place of importance), Rowford, Lees, and Upper and Lower Cheddon.

The church is a pretty little edifice, dedicated to Saint Mary. It consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch and chancel. It is principally built of rag stone, in the Gothic style of architecture, and is considered to have undergone many changes and alterations. The North aisle is new; the South is richly battlemented. The old oak bench-ends are handsomely carved; the present seats are new, of stained deal. The font appears to be also modern. The pulpit is of stone, peculiar in design, with deep quatrefoils and shields, &c. It deserves particular notice. The reading-desk is of handsomely-carved oak. The windows have been greatly altered, many being new. The East window of the chancel contains some good paintings. The East window of the South aisle was erected by subscription to the memory of the late John Ashley Warre, Esq. There is also a memorial window in the South side of the chancel to the memory of J. A.

Warre, Esq., erected by his widow. This church was restored in 1861 by the exertions of the present rector. The work was executed by Jebbott, of Taunton. It contains 344 sittings, of which 132 are free. There are no monuments in the church. The nave roof is of heavy oak. Time had considerably thrown it towards the tower, but it was carefully restored to its original site. On the East side of the tower may yet be seen the position of a former roof of the church. The tower is a plain square building, with a curious pierced stone parapet. It has a peal of five bells. Some persons have considered it a Saxon edifice, it being so unusually plain and simple in design.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of about £520, with residence and 80 acres of glebe land, in the gift of J. A. Warre, Esq., and served by the Rev. S. H. Urwin, M.A., of Worcester College, Oxford.

The rectory faces the church. It is a handsome, new residence, erected by the present rector about fifteen years ago.

There are schools for boys and girls, supported by small bequests and subscriptions.

The churchyard contains the base of a cross, and monuments to the memory of the Speke, Salter, Hardwill, Standfast, Pile, Pearce, Underwood, Gadd, Harper, Bowditch, Corbett and Barrowforth families.

The charities are about £7 10s. per year. Emanuel Drake, of Pitminster, bequeathed to this parish £50, the interest to be given to the poor at Christmas. Roger Drake gave £100, the interest to be distributed yearly.

Cheddon is situated on the Devonian series of the new red sandstone. The soil is generally good, and produces chiefly wheat and barley, &c. Near Hestarcumbe is a quarry of sienite, said to have been used in building old St. Mary's Tower, Taunton. The site of the quarry (tradition says) is the crater of an ancient volcano. There are quarries of rag or slate stone at Upper Cheddon.

J. A. Warre, Esq., is Lord of the Manor.

The river Tone runs to the South of this parish, and the Taunton and Bridgwater Canal passes through it.

The chief landowners are J. A. Warre, Esq., J. Musgrave, Esq., and Mr. Hardwill.

The principal seats are Rowford Lodge, occupied by Lieut.-Col. Hall; Rowford Cottage, the residence of Major Dixon; and The Groves, the property of — Poole, Esq.

Cheddon Fitzpaine is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane. In the Magisterial Division and County Court District of Taunton. It returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. It is in the highway district of Taunton. The polling-place and the nearest money-order office are at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton per foot-post. May be posted at Cheddon letter-box until 5.30. The nearest railway-station is Taunton, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway. There is no carrier. Cheddon is in the Rural Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton. In the Diocese of Bath and Wells. In 1867 the rateable value was £2,473; the county rate £2,473. Its area was returned in 1836 as 899 acres; it is now considered 945. The population in 1831 was 272; in 1860 it was 338.

## Cothelstone



Is a rural parish, situated 6½ miles North-West of Taunton, 1½ miles from Bishop's Lydeard railway-station, on the West Somerset Railway. From the time of the Norman Survey by William I. until lately the manor had been in the possession of the Stawel family. It is now the property of the Redalles.

In the reign of the unfortunate Charles I. Sir John Stawel raised three regiments of horse, one of dragoons,

and another of foot; consequently the Parliament soon afterwards imprisoned him, sold his lands, cut down his woods, and demolished his house, which had been the family residence for many ages. He lived, however, to see the Restoration, and a reversal of his bad fortune. His son was afterwards made a Baron of the Empire.

This parish is finely situated on the Southern slope of the Quantocks, and is generally much admired for its grand scenery, and the varied beauties of its wild plants.

The only hamlet in this parish is Cowhuish, or Oushuish, about one mile to the West.

The church is a beautifully-retired little edifice, dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury, and consists of nave, South aisle, porch and chancel. It is principally built of native hard red sandstone, in the Perpendicular and Decorated styles of Gothic architecture. It was tastefully restored about five years ago by the late E. J. Esdaile, Esq., principally at his own expense. The floors are laid with encaustic tiles. The font is handsome, and peculiar in design. The aisle is divided from the nave by two arches, supported by a large Saxon pillar, which deserves particular notice. The benches are new, with the fine old carved oak stall-ends carefully restored. The windows are of various styles and dates, those on the North side being the latest. They are principally glazed with ornamental glass. The one at the East end of the chancel is richly painted; so are those in the tower and the South side of the chancel. The latter is a memorial window to Plowden C. J. Weston, Esq. Most of the seats are free. The whole appearance of the chancel since its restoration is rich and effective. The church contains numerous monuments of the Stawel family, which are unusually handsome, and attract special attention. Under the aisle arch is a fine tomb, with a knight in armour and his lady by his side. There are no brasses. At the end of the nave, under the North wall, are the remains of another ancient tomb, with two effigies. The tower is rather of unusual construction, especially in the highest story. There is a square turret, with a spire on the North side, and a musical peal of bells. The tower has lately undergone considerable alteration and improvement. It formerly had a strange, heavy, battlemented head, unusual and without taste. It looked as if intended for defence. Extton, in his "Thesaurus," mentions that Cothelstone church was formerly a chapel of ease attached to Kingston.

The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £60, in the patronage of the Dean and Chapter of Wells, and held by the Rev. Francis Warre, M.A., vicar of Bishop's Lydeard.

The tithes formerly belonged to the Prior of Taunton.

There is a Sunday-school at Foulton.

The churchyard, which is kept in most excellent order, contains monuments to the memory of members of the following families:—Esdaile, Drake, Wood, Edwards, Gibbs, &c.

There are no annual charities.

History records that one Bovett, of Taunton, and another man, were hung at Cothelstone, by order of the

noted Jeffrey, to annoy Lord Stawel, who resided there. It is reported that there is in existence an interesting paper giving a description of the funeral procession of one of the Lords Stawel, by which it appears to have been a very grand affair.

The parish of Cothelstone lies at the junction of the Devonian series of rocks, with that of the new red sandstone. The soil is stone rush, and tolerable crops of most kinds of agricultural produce are raised.

There is a fine clear spring at the North-East side of the church, called St. Agnes' Well, formerly said to have been good in many diseases. It is now noted for its use in dairy purposes.

There are quarries of slate limestone on the slope of the hill. Red sandstone and sand are also dug here.

Formerly there was a fine old stone arch across the road near the church; it is now placed at the entrance of the ancient manor-house, held by the Stawel family from the Conquest, until alienated to the late E. J. Esdaile, Esq., who has lately expended a considerable sum in its restoration. It is now in good repair, and is well worthy the inspection of the curious visitor. There is also another old building, with bay windows looking towards the West. This remains in its original state, not having been restored.

A court is held annually at the fall of the year.

There is no revel or fair held now; but it is said that one was formerly observed.

Cothelstone Hill, in this parish, is 1,250 feet high, commanding a very extensive view of the Bristol Channel, South Wales, and eleven counties. There is a round tower on its summit. It is a favourite place for pic-nics, &c. The sides and slopes of the hill, especially towards the West, are beautifully studded with trees, especially beech.

The chief landowner is E. J. Esdaile, Esq., who is also Lord of the Manor.

Nestling at Quantock's foot stands Cothelstone,  
'Squire Esdaile's stately house, a noble pile,  
Stretching behind yon "everlasting hills,"  
A spacious closely-shaven lawn in front,  
While here and there a glistening pool reflects  
Another mansion in its azure depths.  
Dispersed around its own broad acres lie  
In calm luxuriance and fertile pride.  
Hark how the welkin rings with boisterous shout!  
A score of men and boys, in yonder wood,  
Are beating every bush and brake to rouse  
The timid hare and urge her flight across  
The extended plain.

J. B. G.

This parish is also noted for a strange old custom that prevails in the manor. Certain tenements are held by

payment of so many bushels of rye annually, on Michaelmas-day. The tenants are called rye-renters.

A coursing-match has been held here for many years past, and is generally well attended.


For a description of the view from Cothelstone see our account of the hills of West Somerset.

Between Cothelstone Beacon and Willsneck may be seen an ancient tumulus, in a good state of preservation.

Cothelstone is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane. In

the magisterial division of Bishop's Lydeard. In the County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district of Taunton. The polling-place is at Bishop's Lydeard, where is also the nearest money-order office. Is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 was rated at £1,253; the county rate was £1,378. Its area in 1836 was reckoned 1,240 acres; in 1867, 986 acres. The population in 1831 was 108; in 1861 it was 107.

## Corfe,

 BEAUTIFUL parish and village, situated three and a half miles South-East of Taunton, on the Honiton road. Being part of the fifty-four hides of Taunton Deane, it is not particularly mentioned in Domesday-book.

It has always been parcel of that manor, and is therefore subject to the same customs.

Corfe is seated in a woody situation, at the base of the Blackdown Hills, where formerly was a considerable quantity of common land belonging to this parish, but now mostly enclosed.

Corfe, with the adjoining parishes, has a capital agricultural society, which generally meets at Staplehay, Trull.

The church is a beautiful little edifice (dedication unknown). It consists of nave, South aisle and chancel. It is principally built of tooled blue lias stone, in the Anglo-Norman style. The church is generally considered to have been a chapel to Saint Mary's, Taunton. The font is very ancient. The pillars and arches of nave are handsome. The chancel arch is richly carved, with the usual Norman ornaments, and deserves particular notice. The pulpit is of stone. There is a good rose window, with stained glass, at the Western end. The windows are generally small, in accordance with the style of architecture. This church was restored in A.D. 1844, and enlarged in 1858. The seats are new, of which 109 are free. The chancel is richly paved with Mosaic tile, and fitted with new oak stalls. The church is tastefully ornamented with numerous texts of Scripture, in an old character,

on the walls. In the South transept is a small organ. There are monuments of the Wheat, Newton and Cooper families (all in the chancel). The East window is of three lights, with splendid stained glass. The tower is of blue stone, with a peal of four bells. It was rebuilt in the year 1858. It is surmounted with a high pitched stone roof and cross. There is a fine Norman arch at the entrance. The old tower was a small, low, square building, without beauty, and quite unworthy of the church. It contained one window, in the Perpendicular style, and a small lancet one above it. The whole forms a beautiful church, and should be valued in this district from its antiquity and the scarcity of Norman buildings in the neighbourhood.

The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £86, with residence; in the gift of F. W. Newton, Esq., of Barton Grange, and is held by the Rev. A. C. Ainalie, M.A., of University College, Oxford.

The church is said by some to have been formerly a chapel of ease to that of Pitminster.

Previous to 1839 the tithes had been commuted to a rent-charge of £89 13s. Exton says that the gift of the impropriate tithes formerly belonged to the Priory of Taunton.

At the North end of the village are schools for both sexes. The new school-room was built in A.D. 1854.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of members of the following families:—Brown, Beadon, West, Farrington, Newton and Edwards. It is beautifully surrounded with fine elm trees.



The Baptists have a new chapel at Old Combe, also a Sunday school.

Corfe is situated on the lias and new red sandstone beds. The soil is loamy, and produces chiefly wheat, oats, &c., and formerly flax. There are yet a few acres of common land on the hill. Part of Pickeridge Hill is in this parish. There are quarries of flint and limestone.

The village of Corfe possesses a rising little cricket-club.

The turnpike trusts of Taunton, Honiton and Chard have roads in this parish; consequently 'pikes are rather numerous.

On the Blackdown Hills above the village is a deep cutting for a new road, where the prospect is magnificent.

A stream that rises at Otterford washes this parish. Its banks are beautifully strewn in the Spring with numerous graceful wild flowers, including snowdrops, violets, anemones, cowslips, daffodils, primroses, bluebells, oxlips, orchids, &c., the whole forming a scene seldom rivalled.

The hills are delightful during the Summer months. The peeps to be obtained of the Vale of Taunton Deane

well repay a climb. There is a pretty drive across the fields to the village of Staple.

We stood upon the hills when Heaven's wide arch  
Was glorious with the sun's returning march,  
And woods were brightened, and soft gales  
Went forth to kiss the sun-clad vales.

The chief landowners are Beadon, Newton and Kinglake, Esqrs.

Corfe is on the main road from Taunton to Honiton, which road was greatly improved in this neighbourhood about thirty years ago.

There is an excellent boarding-school for young ladies, conducted by Miss Leigh.

Corfe is in the hundred of Taunton Deane. In the magisterial division and county court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district and the polling-place is at Taunton. The nearest money-order office is at Taunton. Nearest railway station Taunton, on the Bristol and Exeter railway. It is in the archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese of Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £1,506; the county rate was £1,505. Its area is 1,115 acres. The population in 1831 was 232; in 1836 it was 271; in 1860 it was 381.

## Combe Florey



S a pretty parish and small village, situated 6½ miles North-West of Taunton, and 1½ miles from Bishop's Lydeard railway-station. Combe Florey, or the "Flowery Valley," is, as its name denotes, a beautifully well-wooded vale—

Every copse  
Deep-tangled, tree irregular, and bush  
Bending with dewy moisture o'er the heads  
Of the coy choristers that lodge within,  
Are prodigal of harmony.

Coombe was one of those manors which was held by the Bishop of Winchester. It was possessed by the De Cumbes, then the De Fluris, then the Meriets, the Fraunceis and the Gwyns.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Yard, formerly called Zerde, an ancient manor; Seven Ash, near Crowcombe; and Holford, in the same neighbourhood.

The church is a small, neat edifice, dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul. It consists of nave, porch and chancel. There is a private aisle on the North side, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The church is principally built of Bishop's Lydeard red stone, in the Gothic style of architecture. The North aisle belongs to the Lord of the Manor. The font is singular. The old bench ends are richly carved, and deserve particular notice. The pulpit is of handsomely-carved old oak. There is a small organ. The windows are mostly of the Perpendicular period. The stair-turret and doorway to rood-loft are yet visible. No one can visit this church without being struck with the very beautifully-restored chancel, which for purity and elegance cannot easily be equalled. The floor steps are of rich mosaic and polished marble. The altar is of carved stonework, the railings of iron, illuminated; the altar-rail of polished marble. The South windows are of painted glass, showing the Evangelists, presented by the

Lethbridge family. The East window contains the Crucifixion, and was the gift of the Smith family, in memory of the celebrated Rev. Sidney Smith, who was for many years rector of this parish. The sidilia is of elegant proportion. The credence table has been erected to perpetuate the memory of the mother of the present rector. The chancel arch is new; the old arches on the North side are handsome. The pillars and arches of this church are also handsome, and are decorated with carved cherubs as capitals. The North or Helyar aisle now presents a curious appearance, between the pure architecture of the Mediæval age and the debased attempts of the Puritans. The windows are peculiar, and have cusped hood moulds, but are spoiled by the ugly glazing. There is a small stone, with Lombardic letters. The heart of a Cannington nun was brought here. There is a tomb with effigies, in stone, of a man and two females. The church contains monuments of the Meriet, Malet, Helyar and Lovelace families. There is also a large tablet, with no name. There are two brasses, but no stained glass beyond what has been mentioned. The tower is handsomely embattled, with pinnacles and gurgoyles, and a good West window. It has a clock and a peal of five bells.

The parish register dates back about 300 years.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £263, with a good residence and 70 acres of glebe, in the gift of the Lord Chancellor. The Rev. Edward Ayahford Sanford, M.A., is the present rector. The presentation formerly belonged to the Priory of Taunton.

The rectory is to the South-West of the church.

There are schools for boys and girls.

The churchyard contains a fine yew tree, a restored cross, and monuments to the memory of members of the following families:—Lethbridge, White, Inman, Hays, Lovelace, Stevens, Bond, Loader and Williams.

The charities are worth about £11 per year.

The parish of Combe Florey is placed upon the new red sandstone series. The soil is rich loam, subsoil marl, and excellent crops of all kinds of agricultural produce are raised, including peas, clover and roots. There are some quarries of hard red sandstone. Sand is also dug here.

The Manor House is the residence of the Lady of the Manor, Mrs. Helyar.

In this parish is Combe Wood, a lovely spot, with an abundance of trees, ferns and wild flowers. The scenery around is charming.

*There is a quiet spirit in these woods,  
That dwells where'er the gentle South wind blows;  
Where, underneath the white-thorn, in the glade,  
The wild flowers bloom, or, kissing the soft air,  
The leaves above their sunny limbs outspread.*—Thompson.

In these woods is a high building, which is a very debased attempt to represent a church tower. The lower portion is occupied as a cottage, but the tenants seemed ignorant for what purpose this unseemly tower was erected. The view from the summit is not extensive, being almost confined to the surrounding parishes.

Some clear and beautiful streams pass through the village.

The hills are numerous and steep.

Formerly the roads were much under the land, and were overhung with foliage.

The chief landowners are the trustees of the late Sir Thomas Lethbridge, Mrs. Helyar, and John Winter, Esq.

The principal seat is Coombe Florey House, occupied by Mrs. Helyar, beautifully situated on a steep hill, near the church.

The West Somerset Railway, from Taunton to Watchet, runs through this parish.

On passing up the village street the visitor will be struck with the imposing appearance of the old Manor Court, or what was formerly a religious house, in connection with that of Cannington. The entrance archway is very perfect. The whole is in excellent preservation, and has lately been well cleaned and pointed. The buildings were formerly higher, but were reduced and converted into stables and coach-houses, on the erection of the new manor-house on the adjoining hill. Over the entrance is a shield, with the arms of the Fraunceis family, formerly Lords of this Manor.

Combe Florey was in 1828 the living of the celebrated wit Sydney Smith, who made the personage one of the most delightful of residences. "He carried his system of furnishing for gaiety," writes his daughter and biographer, Lady Holland, "even to the dress of his books, which were not brown, dark, dull-looking volumes, but all in the brightest bindings." The open windows admitted "a blaze of sunshine and flowers," and commanded a view of a pretty valley, and a wood which was traversed by paths. Here the ingenious Sydney would entertain his London friends with many a pleasant device. On one occasion he called in Art to aid Nature, hanging oranges on the shrubs in the drive and garden. The stratagem succeeded admirably, and great was his exultation when an unlucky urchin from the village was detected in the act of sucking one through a quill. It was as good, he said, as the birds pecking at Zeuxis' grapes. At another time, on a lady happening to hint that the pretty paddock would be improved by deer, he fitted his two donkeys with antlers and placed them immediately in front of the windows. Sydney Smith deserves to be remembered as




much for his writings in the cause of social and political reform as for his inimitable humour.

Combe Florey is in the hundred of Taunton Deane. Magisterial division of Bishop's Lydeard. County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The nearest money-order office at Bishop's Lydeard. Letters arrive from Taunton at 7.15 a.m.

May be posted at Combe until 5.30. Nearest railway-station 'Bishop's Lydeard, on the West Somerset line. Carrier passes through and back from Taunton on Saturdays. Combe is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1860 it was rated at £2,919. The county rate was £2,919. Its area is 1,352 acres. The population in 1860 was 383.

## Durston.

URSTON is a small parish and village, situated 5 miles North-East of Taunton, 6 miles South of Bridgwater, and 157 West of London. It was formerly called Destone, and probably derives its name from its position near the Tone. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"Richard holds of Roger, Destone. . . Alur held it in the time of King Edward. . . . It was and is worth forty shillings." This Roger was Roger Arundell. The manor then passed into the hands of the families of Erleigh and St. Maur. It was afterwards purchased by Lord Stawell, who resided at Buckland, in this parish, thence to the Seymours, in whose possession it now remains.

Durston is on the main road from Taunton to Wells. It is low and woody, but fertile.

The church is a pretty little lofty cruciform edifice, dedicated to St. John, and consists of nave, North and South transept, porch and chancel. The church is principally built of Monkton rag stone, in the decorated style of Gothic architecture, and is supposed to have undergone considerable alteration in or about the 15th century. The font is old, and lined with lead. The benches are good, and deserve notice. The pulpit is entered from the vestry, through an archway in the North wall. The windows have handsome tracery, but plain glass. This church was rebuilt A.D. 1852. The seats are free. In the chancel is a small harmonium. The reading-desk and lectern are of elegant design, in new oak. The altar-cloth and hassocks were presents. This church contains a monument of the Grey family. There are no brasses or stained glass. The tower is heavy, with buttresses and

pinnacles. It has a peal of four bells. Previous to the alterations, or rather the rebuilding of this church, the old chancel was lofty, with a highly-pitched gable.

The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £172, in the gift of the Rev. A. Grey, and is served by the Rev. W. S. Tomkins, of West Monkton.

There is no parsonage.

Near the church some capital school buildings have been lately erected, in which a Sunday-school is also held.

There is a gallery in the tower, with an open screen.

The churchyard contains a yew, and monuments to the memory of the following families:—Tomkins, Rosenberg, Brown, Hearn, Trevenen, Edwards, Fouracre and House.

Near the entrance to the churchyard is a fine spring of water, lately enclosed with pretty stonework.

In this parish is the site of the Priory and Preceptory of Buckland, Mynchin Buckland, or Buckland Sororum, one of the Commandries of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. It was the focus of an influence sensibly, deeply and widely felt. A few crumbling fragments, now recognized with difficulty, once formed the boundary between it and the surrounding world. The green undulations near were long centuries ago the demesne ponds that supplied with their habitual and constant diet the successive brethren and sisters of the house. The system of the hospital itself was unlike all others, save one. And, in addition to this, it is specially to be noted that we have here a feature which even in that Order was not elsewhere to be seen in England. Mynchin Buckland was both a priory and a preceptory. The latter was a normal example of a Hospitalars' Commandry. The former was

the sole instance in the kingdom of its peculiar class. It was a community of women, and the only one that the Order possessed. As such, its history presents us not only with a subject of the greatest local interest, but with an unique chapter in monastic annals at large. It is at once a new scene to the student of olden days, and one of which no county but Somersetshire can furnish him with an example. The Order of Knights Hospitalars began and took its name from a hospital founded at Jerusalem, and its chief objects were the defence of the pilgrims on their road thither, and the care and maintenance of them during their sojourn. It included among its members both men and women; and, of the duties just enumerated, the latter was necessarily, as well as specially, the office of the sisters, as was the former of the brethren. The knights, or officers of the highest rank, were called in the first instance Knights of St. John of Jerusalem; and afterwards, from the place of their successive residence, Knights of Rhodes and Knights of Malta. The hospital was founded in the Holy City about the year 1092, and was dedicated to St. John the Baptist. Eight years afterwards the Order was introduced into England, and the brethren's first house was built for them at Clerkenwell in the year 1100. They soon acquired immense wealth, which was much increased in the earlier part of the fourteenth century by the cession to them of the estates of the suppressed Order of the Knights Templars. (Further particulars of this interesting establishment may be

found in the Tenth Volume of the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.)

Durston lies on the new red sandstone series; the lower parts of the parish on alluvium. The soil is clayey and sandy, and produces chiefly wheat, barley and beans. Red sand is also dug here.

H. D. Seymour, Esq., M.P., is Lord of the Manor.

The Bristol and Exeter Railway passes through this parish, and the junction with the Yeovil and Langport line is at Durston station.

The Bridgwater and Taunton Canal also runs through the parish.

The chief landowners are H. D. Seymour, Esq., M.P., and Lord Portman.

The principal houses are The Lodge, occupied by — Kittner, Esq., and Buckland, the residence of — Bond, Esq.

Durston is in the hundred of North Petherton. In the magisterial division of Bridgwater. County Court district of Taunton. It returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. Letters arrive from Taunton at 9.30 a.m. May be posted at Durston until 3.30. The railway-station is about a quarter of a mile from the church. Durston is in the deanery of Bridgwater. In the archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £3,081; the county rate was £2,915. Its area is 1,022 acres. The population in 1831 was 211; in 1836 it was 226; in 1861 it was 223.

## Elworthy



Elworthy is a small scattered parish and village, situated 12 miles West of Taunton, and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Wiveliscombe. It was formerly called Elwrde, which means "The Old Village." At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"Dudiman holds Elwrde of William. . . . Dunne held it in the time of King Edward. . . . It was formerly worth twenty shillings, now forty shillings. . . . Of this hide the King holds one Yardland, belonging to the Manor of Welletune." John de Elworthy held this manor under the Bohuns. It passed on to the Willets, the Poltons, Beaumonts, Escotts, &c.

Elworthy is situated in a woody, romantic spot, the valleys being deep and shady, and the roads were formerly rough, narrow, and overhung with hedges. They are now much improved. The wild strawberry and raspberry, with numerous ferns and mosses, and on the high ground the whortleberry, flourish abundantly in the neighbourhood.

The church is a small, neat edifice, dedicated to St. Martin, and consists of nave, porch, transept and chancel, with a stained glass window. Formerly all the windows had square heads. The tower is a small, square, low embattled building, with a peal of four bells.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £280, with residence and 62 acres of glebe, in the gift of, and held by, the Rev. John Eddy, M.A., of Trinity College, Oxford. This living was formerly appropriated to the Prior and Brethren of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, at London.

Adjoining are small schools, supported by voluntary contributions.

The churchyard contains a fine old yew tree, and numerous monuments of past generations.

The parish of Elworthy stands upon the Devonian series, with lias beds. The soil is principally rag and stone rush, and produces average crops of wheat, oats, barley and roots. There are many acres of common land at Brendon Hill, which supplied the poor with turf. On its summit is a spring, rising on a boggy soil, surrounded by willows. Report says this spring is unfathomable.

John Blommart, Esq., is Lord of the Manor.

To the East end of the village is a lofty knoll, called, from the adjoining hamlet, Willet Hill, or Tor, on the top of which stands the shell of an hexagonal embattled tower, 80 feet high, erected at the expense of the neighbouring gentry, and is a fine object for many miles around.

The West Somerset Railway runs within two or three miles of Elworthy village.

The hills are deserving of notice, especially Willet Hill (before mentioned, an outlier of the Brendons), which is a commanding eminence, situated one mile from the church, from whence a fine view of Wales and the Bristol Channel may be obtained.

The chief landowner is John Blommart, Esq., whose residence, Willet House, is the principal seat of the neighbourhood. It is situated two miles South-East of the church, and is surrounded by fine lawns and pleasure-grounds.

This parish is also noted for a British camp, situated on the West point of Brendon Hill, and known by the name of Elworthy Barrows.

Elworthy is in the hundred of Williton and Free Manors. Magisterial division and County Court district of Williton. Returns one guardian to the Williton Union. The nearest money-order office is also at Williton. Letters arrive from Taunton through Lydeard. Elworthy is in the deanery of Dunster. In the archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 1,617 acres. The population in 1831 was 187; in 1836 it was returned as 210; in 1861 it was 197.

## Fitzhead



IS a healthy parish and small and pretty village, situated eight miles West of Taunton, six miles North of Wellington railway-station, and three East of Wiveliscombe. It was formerly called Fifehead, or Fifhde, and probably derives its name from five hides (a measure of land). At the time of the Norman survey by William I. Fitzhead was frequently mentioned in the accounts of Wiveliscombe, in which manor it was formerly included. The country around Fitzhead is pleasantly wooded, and intermixed with hills and valleys.

The church is a neat and lofty edifice, dedicated either to St. James or St. Mary Magdalene (it is doubtful which). It consists of nave and chancel, and is principally built of red sandstone, in the Perpendicular style of Gothic architecture. The following explicit description is all that Collinson gives in his account of the old church:—"It is

dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene; is a small Gothic edifice, of one pace, with a tower at the West end, containing a clock and five bells." This is a fair sample of all his descriptions of our beautiful parish churches. A unique carved screen deserves particular notice. It was removed in 1849 to the Western end of the church, under the gallery. The pulpit is of stone. There is a neat organ on the North side of the chancel. Some handsome oak seats were placed in the chancel in 1863. The church was rebuilt A.D. 1849 (about twenty years too soon to have benefitted by the revival of Gothic architecture). A vestry was erected in 1863. The seats are of oak, from the original church. In fact, all that is really worth seeing are the few relics saved from the old church. There are two quaint old brasses of the Cannon family fixed on the seats. There are also monuments of the Trevelyan, Kent, North and Cannon families. The East

window is of painted glass, in memory of F. M. Knolles, D.D. The tower is old; the Eastern arch is very plain and massive. There is a peal of five bells; formerly there was a clock. A large square turret stands on the South side of the tower. The old church had a highly-pitched roof, and square-headed debased windows, and the usual stairs to rood-loft. A sketch of it may be seen in the Pigot collection of Somersetshire churches at the Museum of the Archaeological Society at Taunton.

The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £104, in the peculiar jurisdiction of the Vicar of Wiveliscombe, in the cathedral church of Wells, and held by the Rev. G. R. Gilling, B.A.

The great tithes are owned by the Rev. Richard Beadon.

The old vicarage is adjoining, and is now used as a labourer's cottage.

There is a day-school, supported by subscription, also a Sunday-school.

In the South-West corner of the churchyard is the old parish tithe barn.

The churchyard contains the usual yew, the old stocks, and a small cross; also monuments to the memory of members of the following families:—Cannon, Southey, Upton, Williams, Downing, Edwards and Newton.

Great improvements within the past twelve years have been effected in this parish.

The soil is red sand, (the subsoil is the new red sandstone), and is chiefly cultivated on the Norfolk system. It produces wheat, barley, roots, &c., &c. Formerly large quantities of flax were grown here, and even now it is cultivated. There are quarries of conglomerate limestone,

which is burnt into agricultural lime. Sand is also dug here.

Lord Ashburton was Lord of the Manor. A court is held for the manor at Wiveliscombe and at Milverton.

A revel or fair is held on the first Saturday after St. James's-day. (This old custom would tend to fix the dedication of the church to St. James.) Formerly wrestling and cudgel-playing and all kinds of sports were played at these times.

A few years ago the roads were very narrow, and overhung with trees, but they are now much improved.

The hills are numerous and steep.

The chief landowner is Lord Ashburton.

The principal house is Fitzhead Court, occupied by J. E. Knollys, Esq., who manages Lord Ashburton's estates.

There are few natural productions, but no fossils; but this parish is noted for the numerous kinds of scarce mosses that flourish here.

Fitzhead is near the main road from Taunton to Wiveliscombe, through Bishop's Lydeard and Halse. It is in the hundred of Kingsbury West. In the magisterial division of Milverton and Wiveliscombe. County Court district of Wellington. It is in the highway district of Wiveliscombe. Nearest money-order offices at Milverton and Wiveliscombe. Letters arrive from Taunton at 9 a.m.; may be posted at Fitzhead until 4.30 p.m. Nearest railway-station, Bishop's Lydeard, on the West Somerset line. Is in the deanery of Dunster. In the archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 1,208 acres; in 1836 said to have been 1,121. The population in 1831 was 300, in 1851 returned as 356; in 1861 it was 309.

## Hatch Beauchamp.



HATCH BEAUCHAMP is a beautifully-situated parish and village, six miles South-East of Taunton, six miles South-West of Ilminster, and ten miles from Chard. It was formerly called Hache, and derives its name from *Hache*, a gate or entrance, probably to that of the forest of Neroche. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"Robert holds of the Earl Hache. . . ."

Godric and Godwin held the same in the time of King Edward for three manors. . . . It was worth eight pounds, now four pounds." Collinson states that it derived its second name from becoming the property of the Beauchamps, a Norman family.

Early in the 14th century John de Beauchamp fortified his mansion, which was afterwards known as Hatch Castle.

Some consider that Beauchamp is derived from the



French, "*Beautiful Camp*." There is a tradition that at a place called Belmont, on the upper part of the Hatch Court estates, in this parish, existed an ancient camp, probably the "*Beautiful Camp*," and that it was once occupied by a fair lady of great renown.

The scenery, views and trees around this village are such as cannot fail to delight the visitor, and ought to raise his thoughts and ideas to higher and loftier subjects.

The church is a pretty edifice, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and is now almost hid by lofty trees. It consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch and chancel, and there are transepts attached on either side of the chancel. The church is principally built of dressed blue lias stone, in the late Gothic style of architecture, and is considered to have been built in or about the 13th century. The old bench-ends are very rich, but are few in number; a number of new ones have lately been fixed, and have been constructed with great taste by Mr. Blackmore, a resident in the parish. There is a good organ. The windows on the North side have square heads, and deserve particular notice, as they are considered unique. The pulpit is new, of Caen stone, with carved and sunk panels. About 140 of the seats are free. The windows on the South side are Late Perpendicular. There is a memorial window to Col. Raban. In A.D. 1834 a new aisle was added on the South side, and also a transept, with a highly-pointed South gable, also on the same side; the latter was removed about 30 years afterwards. The cost of the latter restoration amounted to upwards of £1,500, of which the parish has paid by rate about £200, the remainder by subscription, Gore-Langton, Esq., M.P., bearing the larger share. This church contains two monuments of the Dymock family, and one of the Rabans. The following description of this church was written at the time of its restoration:—"The church of Hatch Beauchamp, as it stood a year or two ago, was in a very ruinous condition. It was built of Curry Mallet stone, which in many parts was literally crumbling away. Other churches in the neighbourhood, built of similar material, and apparently about the same date, exhibit a like state of decay. The chancel arch, with its zigzag ornamentation, and other portions of the chancel, clearly indicate Early Norman style, and fixed the date of erection at about the 13th century. The edifice consisted of nave, tower, North and South aisles, chancel, with North aisle and vestry. The South aisle, North aisle and vestry were added in 1834. In carrying out the work of restoration, the same dimensions have been retained. To take the exterior first, the coat of rough-cast which covered the whole of the walls has been taken off, all repairs effected with Langport stone, and the whole carefully

pointed. The buttresses of the tower had to be removed and rebuilt—rather a delicate job—and the parapets and pinnacles taken down and refixed. Though small, the tower is nicely proportioned; and Mr. G. Scott, the eminent ecclesiastical architect, under whose superintendence the renovation has been effected, showed his judgment by preserving the original form. Towards the restoration of the tower the parish provided £200, the remainder being supplied by Mr. Gore-Langton. The cost of the rest of the work has been defrayed mainly by the residents of Hatch and its vicinity. The roofs have been re-slatted, and new crosses, &c., placed. Next we take the windows. An awkward large square three-light on the South side of the chancel has been built up, the interior being hidden by a large painting given to the church by the late H. P. Collins, Esq. This picture formerly blocked up the Eastern chancel window, which is now of stained glass, by Lavers and Barraud, representing events in our Saviour's life. Another coloured window in the South aisle, executed by Gibbs, is the gift of the Raban family; while Mr. Lance has paid for a new window on the North side of the chancel. The window in the chancel aisle is likewise new. A peculiarity which existed in some of the windows is yet to be noticed; they are arched with flat wooden lintels and spandrels, with carving between the windows and the lintels. Now we come to the interior. The Western gallery has been removed, opening the tower and the Western window to the church. The plaster has not been wholly stripped from the walls, as their condition rendered that undesirable. A doorway in the North aisle, blocked up by Mr. Hardstaff's monument, has been re-opened. The chancel arch; the arch between the North aisle and the chancel aisle, that at the East end of the South aisle, and one in continuation of the arcade in the North aisle, are all new. The pulpit is of Caen stone." The tower is a very handsome square structure, with tall crocketed pinnacle, unusual in design. It formerly had a clock and a peal of five bells. One bell and the clock are considered to have been placed in the adjoining mansion. There is a fine altar-piece, representing the "*Descent from the Cross*," by Perriss. It is now placed against the South window of the chancel.

The parish register dates from 1760.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £167, in the gift of Nathaniel Gould, Esq. The Rev. William Gould, M.A., of Balliol College, Oxford, is the present rector.

The rectory is situated in the South corner of the village. There are National schools for boys and girls in the "*Rectory Lane*." There is a Sunday-school held in the class-room.



The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of the Jones, Raban, Farthing, Parris, French, Bicknell, Humphreys, Gould and Paul families.

There was formerly a fine old cross in this churchyard, of the date of 1688; but some years since the then 'squire of the neighbouring mansion having lost an old servant, and being anxious to perpetuate his memory, ordered the old cross to be converted into an obelisk, and there it now remains—a monument of the perverted power of a country 'squire, and of the depraved taste of the eighteenth century.

There are no annual charities.

The Baptists and Wesleyans have each a neat chapel in this village, both erected in the style of the eighteenth century.

Hatch Beauchamp is on the lias series. The soil is dry and healthy, and produces chiefly wheat, oats and barley. Teasels are also grown here, and are sent off in large quantities to the North of England for cloth dressing. There is neither common land or quarries in this parish, or any hamlets. Griphytes and anomia are found in this neighbourhood.

There is a flourishing agricultural association in connection with this and the adjoining parishes.

In 1301 a license for a fair was obtained by the then lord of the manor, but it has long been discontinued.

A stream rises at Staple and runs through this parish.

The Chard and Taunton railway passes through the village, and has a station here.

The Chard and Taunton canal also passes near Crimson Hill, where are several tunnels, from which alabaster was taken. The canal is now destroyed.

The parish has a right of common in the forest of Neroche and on West Sedgmoor.

The principal seats are Hatch Park, the residence of W. H. P. Gore-Langton, Esq., M.P., J.P.; and Hatch Court, the property of H. Hardstaff, Esq.; The Lodge, George Raban, Esq.

This village is not well supplied with water. There is a common pump opposite the inn; but this well was drained by the new railway tunnel. It is now restored.

Hatch is on the main road from Taunton to Ilminster. Its situation is pleasant, the country around being well wooded, affording from its variety of surface many agreeable prospects. In 1796 it contained but 36 houses.

Hatch Beauchamp is in the hundred of Abdick and Bulstone. In the magisterial division of Ilminster. County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district is at Taunton. Nearest money-order office at Taunton or North Curry. Letters arrive from Taunton at 7 a.m.; may be posted at Hatch until 9 p.m. The railway-station is in the village, on the Chard and Taunton line. Carriers leave for Ilminster and Taunton several times a-week. Hatch is in the deanery of Crewkerne. In the archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1864 it was rated at £2,226; the county rate was £2,261. Its area is 1,120 acres. The population in 1831 was 324; in 1861 it was also 324.

## Halse

**H** is a fruitful parish and healthy village, situated seven miles West of Taunton, two miles from Bishop's Lydeard railway-station, and six North-East of Wellington. It was formerly called Halsa or Halse Priors, and probably derives its first name from the halse tree, and its second from the connection of this parish with the Bishopric of Winchester before the Conquest. The manor of Halse belonged in Saxon times to the hundred of Taunton, and did suit and service to the great signory of the Bishop of Winchester, and was subject to the same custom as the manor of Taunton. At the time of the Norman survey by

William I. it was thus described:—"Roger Arundell (a faithful follower and favourite of the Conqueror) holds of the King Halse. . . . Adman held it in the time of King Edward; when he received it it was worth one hundred shillings, now six pounds."

The parish is a small sub-division of the hundred of Williton and Freemanor, adjoining Taunton Deane.

It lies in a fine woody country, and is well watered with small streams.

Northernhay (so called from its position) is a hamlet of this parish.

The church is a plain and neat edifice, dedicated to St. James or St. John, it seems doubtful which. It consists

of nave, North aisle (of late date) porch and chancel. It is principally built of rough, coarse sandstone, and is considered to have been much altered at various times. Over the Northern arcade is a curious carved head, ornamented with foliage (apparently oak boughs) protruding from the nose. It has been suggested that probably this has some connection with the worship of the Druids, the oak being their sacred tree; but possibly the leaves are intended for those of the halse, emblematic of the name of the village. The font is of Norman construction, and deserves particular notice from its antiquity. There is a very handsome carved screen, which formerly stood between the chancel and nave, but is now removed to enclose the altar space. The windows are mostly square-headed, of a debased style. Those at the East and West ends of the church are of the Perpendicular period. The North aisle is also of debased construction, and is later than the other parts of the church. It has been called Smith's aisle. Many of the seats are free. The capitals of the pillars are queerly carved (if such scratching can be called carving). Probably they were never considered as finished. The arches between the chancel and end of North aisle are very good, and formerly had small handsome shafts. Adjoining is an excellent painted glass window, in memory of Sir Math. Thorn. The hagioscope in the North pier is perfect, but very plain. It has the appearance of age. The chancel is lofty, but the want of a chancel-arch is very striking. The church contains monuments of members of the following families:—Spencer, Frobisher, Cornish, Thorn and Manning. On each side of the porch is some good geometrical stone tracery, which looks as if brought from some other place, probably from a religious house that stood near. The painted window at the East end of the chancel is of strange construction, having been brought from the Continent. The tower is a small, plain, square building, with a stair turret to the height of the church on the North side. On the South side are two small quaint buttresses. It has a clock and a peal of five bells. The original roof of the nave appears to have been of greater height and higher pitch than that of the present. The stairs and turret to the rood-loft are on the North side. The church greatly requires restoration and re-seating, the present seats being far behind the age. Only one of the original benches is visible.

The living is a vicarage, of the annual value of one hundred and seventy-five pounds, with residence and two acres of glebe land. In the gift of Sir James Langham, Bart. The Rev. R. T. Mills, M.A., of Magdalene College, Oxford, is the present vicar. The benefice of Halse was formerly appropriated to the Prior and Brethren of the

Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem in London. The vicarage is near the church.

In the village are substantially-built schools, erected in 1856 by the late Edward Prior, Esq., and endowed by him with about £30 per year.

The churchyard is large, and beautifully situated, on high ground, and contains monuments of the Hancock, Bond, Prior, Alexander, Perp, Hearn, Manning, Baker, Downe, Small, Gatchell and Worthington families. There are some beautiful cedars of Lebanon in the churchyard.

The Wescombe and other charities are worth £40 per year.

The Bible Christians have a small chapel at Halse, also a Sunday-school.

The parish of Halse stands upon the series of rocks known as the new red sandstone. The soil is a rich sandy loam, subsoil marl, and excellent crops of all the usual agricultural produce are obtained. There were formerly some acres of common land at Whitmoor and at Common Down. There are three quarries of hard red stone in the parish, and kilns for burning it into lime. A stiff clay is also dug here, and plenty of sand.

The manor-house is near the church. R. C. A. Prior, Esq., is the lord of the manor.

At Halse was formerly a small nunnery, now destroyed. (Some account of it may be found in the Rev. T. Hugo's "Somersetshire Nunneries.") It is said that some portions of it, including the windows, were taken to Taunton Priory.

An annual court was formerly held at Halse.

It was once the custom to hold a yearly revel on the first Sunday after the fourth of May.

A considerable quantity of agricultural implements have been manufactured at Halse for some years past.

The chief landowners are R. C. A. Prior, Esq., J. D. Hancock, Esq., and R. N. Row, Esq.

The parish is noted for its healthy character, the pleasant aspect of its village streets and the beautiful views to be obtained from the neighbouring hills.

Halse is in the hundred of Williton and Freemanor. In the magisterial division of Bishop's Lydeard. County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. It is in the highway district of Wivaliscombe. The nearest money-order offices are at Bishop's Lydeard or Milverton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 8 a.m.; may be posted at Halse until 5 p.m. The nearest railway-station is Bishop's Lydeard, on the West Somerset line. Halse is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £2,952; the county rate was also £2,952. Its area in 1839 was returned as 1,220 acres; in 1867, 1,300 acres. The population in 1831 was 447; in 1841 it was 444; in 1861 it was 453.

## Huish Champflower.



LARGE and beautiful parish and pretty village, situated  $13\frac{1}{2}$  miles North-west of Taunton, 3 miles North-west of Wiveliscombe, 10 miles North of Wellington, 13 East of Dulverton. It was formerly called Hiwis de Campo Florido, and derives its second name from a family of that title, the meaning of which probably is "The Flower of the Camp." At the time of the Norman survey by William I. it was thus described:—"Roger himself holds of Hiwis. . . . Ailric held it at the time of King Edward. . . . Pasture one mile long and half a mile broad. It was worth when he received it £6, now £7." It remained in the families of the Champflowers for a long period, when it passed to the Verneys, then to the Le Walisha. It was afterwards sold by John Natherwaye to John Norman, and then passed into the Trevelyan family, in whose possession it still remains.

This parish is full of springs, which produce a most verdant and beautiful appearance upon the herbage. The ferns here are very fine. There are numerous woods, and the scenery generally is most charming, especially from the higher parts of the parish.

"The veil of cloud was lifted, and below  
Glowed the rich valley, and the river's flow  
Was darkened by the forest's shade,  
Or glistened in the white cascade."

The church is a large and ancient stone edifice, dedicated to St. Peter. It consists of nave, large North aisle and chancel. It is principally built in the Gothic style of architecture, generally of the Perpendicular period, and is considered to have been much altered in or about the 16th century. The North aisle is large and lofty, and is said to have been built by Lady Champflower since the erection of the church. Its Eastern window is of unusual size, and seems to have formerly been entirely of painted glass, a large portion of which yet remains. The other windows are square-headed, and very inferior in design. The arcade consists of four pointed arches, on handsome clustered pillars. The font is apparently very old. The original seats or benches remain, with little alteration, and in fair condition, and they deserve particular notice. In

the Western gallery is a small and neat organ. The windows are mostly of the Perpendicular period. The building, if restored, would make as fine a country parish church as could be seen for many miles round. The seats are generally free. The roof of this church is good, and of capital design. There are monuments of the Willis, Bucknell, Darch, Webber, Hallings, Hill, Good, Guppy, and Commons families. On the exterior of the East end of the chancel are two curious iron rods, which have been there time out of mind, the uses of which are not known. Above the Eastern window are two pieces of carved stone, said to contain dates. The tower is lofty, and battlemented, with small niches on each side of the windows. It is built of large stones, probably brought on the backs of horses, before roads were suitable for carriages. The top of the tower and the battlements were reconstructed about thirty years ago. There is a good peal of five bells.

Between this village and Clatworthy, in a beautiful valley by the side of the Tone, is an old building that was formerly used as a school.

In the tower may be seen the "Parish Cradle." Lest our lady readers should express astonishment at this information we would add, for their benefit, a little explanation. The parish cradle, then, instead of being a repository for helpless infants, was made to contain a full-grown man, who stood in it, as in a pillory, and was suspended from the top of the tower when it was proposed to repair the rough cast or whiten the building on the exterior. There is also an old carved-oak bird (an eagle, we presume) lectern, on which the lessons formerly were read.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £445, including residence and 188 acres of glebe, in the gift of Sir Walter O. Trevelyan, Bart., of Nettlecombe Court, and held by the Rev. John Woodhouse, B.A., of Sidney, Sussex College, Cambridge, who principally supports the schools, which are adjoining.

There is a small iron church or chapel on the Brendon Hills, near this parish, for the use of the miners employed there.

The churchyard contains relics of a cross. In the Pigot collection of drawings at the Somersetshire Archaeological Society's Museum the cross is shown as perfect in 1836. There are also monuments to the memory of members of the Venn, Hawkins, Sellick, Stone, Bucknell, Norman, Eyre, Good, Yender and White families. In the North-East corner of the churchyard formerly stood an old building, said to have been erected by Lady Champflower, and afterwards used as a poor-house. It had a direct communication with the church and rood-loft. These old buildings were removed some time since, the ground being thrown into the churchyard.

On the Northern extremity of this parish, on the Brendon Hills, are iron mines, worked by the Ebbw Vale Iron Company, who have constructed a new railway, called the West Somerset Mineral line, to Watchet, but they now carry goods and passengers.

Huish Champflower is partly seated on the Devonian series of rocks, which contain small distant portions of lias. The soil is loamy, with some clay, the subsoil slate, and produces chiefly wheat and oats; barley is also grown here, and some roots. The common land was divided about 25 years ago. There are parish quarries of road-stone at Haydon Common and Brendon Hill.

The roads in this neighbourhood are generally repaired with the white pebbles found among the usual slaty stone.

They are vulgarly called "popple stones," and give a bright and sparkling appearance when spread on the hills of the parish. Remains of a Druidical circle may be seen.

A court was formerly held in October, in the Ivy House. There is no revel or fair.

The river Tone rises in this parish, in a spot called Beverly Bottom, and after falling into a large pool of water runs down some beautiful well-wooded valleys.

The hills are numerous and of great beauty, being magnificently covered with foliage, ferns and wild flowers.

The chief landowners are Messrs. Woodhouse, Trey, Guppy and Broadmead.

The principal seats are Shute, occupied by Fred. Ford, Esq., Middleton Court, the seat of — Copp, Esq., and Catford, the property of Mrs. Stone.

Huish Champflower is in the hundred of Williton and Fremanor. In the magisterial division of Milverton. County Court district of Wellington. Returns one guardian to the Dulverton Union. The highway district, the polling-place, and nearest money-order office are at Wiveliscombe. Letters arrive from Wiveliscombe at 8.20 a.m.; may be posted at Huish until 5. The nearest railway-station is Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway. Huish is in the deanery of Dunster. In the archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. The population in 1831 was 345; in 1851 it was 454; in 1861, 444.

## Heathfield



IS a pretty little parish, situated five miles North-West of Taunton, and five miles North of Wellington. It was variously called Herfield, Hethfelde, Heathfield Talbot, Heathfield Durborough, and Heathfield Columbers. Probably it derives its first name from the fields of heath with which this part of the country was at one time studded, and its second from various families. At the time of the Norman survey by William I. it was thus described:—"Ralph holds of William Herfield. . . . Elwin held it in the time of King Edward. . . . It was worth thirty shillings, now four pounds."

It passed from the family of the Mohuns, of Dunster, to the Talbots, Durborough, Hadley, Luttrells, &c.

It was subject to the same custom as the manor of Taunton Deane, except that its tenants were not compelled to "go to the wars."

It is said the Luttrells of Dunster formerly had a seat at Venns, in this parish, which was destroyed about 60 years ago, and the materials were used in building the Horse and Jockey Inn.

The church is a small edifice, dedicated to St. John, and consists of nave and chancel. There is a small chapel or aisle attached on the South side. The church is principally built of red sandstone, in the Gothic style of architecture, and was probably considerably altered about the 16th century. The chancel was rebuilt about 25 years ago by the late rector. The old font was destroyed at the restoration of the church in 1841, and a very singular

affair is now substituted. The arch of the North aisle is plain and heavy, and deserves particular notice, as it appears ancient. The old pulpit was broken to pieces in 1840, and the present one constructed by the late rector, from odd pieces of oak collected from various places. The windows are generally of inferior design, mostly of a late date. This church was repaired A.D. 1840, and a portion of the chancel rebuilt. Upwards of 70 of the seats are free. They are mostly of painted deal. There are good tower and porch arches, but no arch between the chancel and nave. The church contains three monuments of the Cornish family, and old stones of the Robinsons and Bulls. On the North side of the chancel is an Elizabethan monument of handsome design. A barrel organ was fixed in 1843. The tower is a small, plain, square building. It has a clock and a peal of four bells, one only of which is sound. This church is in the neglected state so general about 50 years ago. It reflects little credit on the parishioners.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £300, with residence and 64 acres of glebe land, in the gift of and held by the Rev. E. B. C. Spurway, of Trinity College, Cambridge.

The rectory was rebuilt by Jeboult, of Taunton, about ten years ago, and is a pretty erection, in the Gothic style.

Near the church is a small mixed school. The building was erected some years since by the late rector, the Rev. —Cornish, in the prevailing debased style of that day.

The churchyard contains a cross, with a canopy, cherub, and patron saint. There are monuments to the memory of members of the following families:—Cornish, Cattle, Bond, Bryant, Gifford, Fouracre.

The charities are of the value of only £2 a-year.

The parish of Heathfield stands upon the new red sandstone series of rocks. The soil is mostly clay and sand, and produces generally good agricultural crops. There are no quarries of stone here.

F. G. Bernard, Esq., is Lord of the Manor.

A revel was formerly held on the Sunday before Midsummer, but is now discontinued.

A stream that rises on the Brendon Hills divides this parish from Bishop's Lydeard.

The chief landowners are F. G. Bernard, Esq.,—Helyar, Esq., and Lady Slade.

Heathfield is in the hundred of Taunton Deane, in the magisterial division of Bishop's Lydeard, and County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district is at Taunton. Nearest money-order office at Milverton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 9 a.m.; may be posted at Heathfield until 4.20. Nearest railway-station, Taunton. Carriers constantly pass near the village. Heathfield is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1861 it was rated at £1,379; the county rate was £1,379. Its area is 692 acres. The population in 1821 was 131; in 1851 it was 136; in 1861 it was 124.

## Hillfarrance.



HILLFARRANCE is a small parish and village, situated 4 miles West of Taunton, and 3½ miles North-East of Wellington station. It was formerly called Hille, afterwards Hulle-Ferun, and derives its second name from the Ferun family, the word being afterwards corrupted into Farrance. At the time of the Norman survey by William I. it was thus described:—"Walter holds of Alured Hille. . . . Alvi held it in the time of King Edward. . . . There is a mill of 30d. rent. It was worth £3, now £2."

The manor for years belonged for some time to a family named Feron or Ferun above mentioned.

Hillfarrance lies rather low, in a flat and fertile well-wooded neighbourhood.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Allarford (so called from a family of that name, who were for some time lords of the manor of Allarford), and Hill Common, about a mile distant on the Milverton road.

The church is a small edifice, dedicated to the Holy Cross, and consists of nave, chapel and porch. There are no aisles. The chapel, which is on the South side, appears from an inscription to have been erected in A.D. 1333, but some of the work seems later. It has a pierced parapet, without pinnacles. The church is principally built of red and grey sandstone, in the Gothic style of architec-



ture. The South aisle, or rather the chapel, was built by William de Vernai, lord of the manor, whose family were here interred. It was made over to the parish A.D. 1857. The font is new, very heavy, on short pillars. The seats have been restored, with some of the ancient bench ends, which are good. The pulpit is also new, of Hamdon Hill stone. The windows on the South aisle are of good design, but those on the North side are inferior, being of later make. The floors are mostly of encaustic tile. This church was restored in A.D. 1857. 133 of the seats are free. There is a small neat harmonium in the church. There are monuments of the Vernai and North families, but no brasses or stained glass. The tower, which is very massive, stands at the West end, with a turret on the North side, similar to that of Wellington. It has a peal of five bells.

The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £150, with residence and about 13 acres of glebe, in the gift and occupation of the Rev. J. King Eagles, the well-known writer on county subjects who signs his papers "X X X." The church was endowed with £200 private benefaction and £400 Royal bounty. The living was formerly appropriated to the Priors of Barlinch.

The parsonage is adjoining, and has been restored, it having been injured by fire about two years since.

Near are schools, founded by Lady Slade, late of Muntys Court.

The soil would appear to be very soft, as many of the roads are sunk a considerable depth below the ground.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of the Davis, England, Roberts and Cattle families.

We have heard some reports that the history of this village was published some years ago, but have not succeeded in seeing a copy. It is said that it was written by one of the Appledore family, when the Rev. — Button was rector.

The Bible Christians have a new chapel, with schools, at Hillcommon.

Hillfarrance is seated on the alluvium. The soil is mostly a strong clay, subsoil marl, and produces chiefly wheat, beans, mangold, swede and most all kinds of agricultural produce is generally raised in good crops. Rough coarse sandstone is dug here.

The manor in 1333 was held by William de Vernai, and is now divided among the landowners.

There is a small river from Milverton, which passes through the village. The new railway to Barnstaple also passes near.

The chief landowners are E. A. Sanford, Esq., and Lord Ashburton.

Hillfarrance is in the hundred of Taunton Deane, in the magisterial division of Taunton, and County Court district of Wellington. Returns one guardian to the Wellington Union. It is in the highway district of Wellington. The polling-place is at Taunton. Nearest money-order offices and railway-stations at Taunton and Wellington. Hillfarrance is in the rural deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 920 acres. The population in 1831 was 579; in 1861 it was 582.

## Kingston.



INGSTON is a large and beautifully-situated parish and village, three and half miles North of Taunton and eight miles South of Bridgwater. It was formerly called Kyngeston. By its present title it would appear that its name was derived from some association with the king. Many of the lands in the neighbourhood were held by King William I. At the time of the Norman survey the lordship of Kingston was described in the account of Taunton Deane,

as it formed part of that customary manor. The tithing-men are annually chosen at Taunton.

Hestercombe was a manor in the possession of the Mohuns, of Dunster, and afterwards passed into the hands of the Warres. Another manor, called Volis, or Volesse, is situated to the North of Hestercombe.

The following hamlets or places are also in this parish :—Hestercombe, as above mentioned, Nallesbourne, Cowhuish, or Cushuish, Fulford and Gilbeare.

The parish is divided into the Eastern and Western tithings.

It is pleasantly situated under the Southern side of the Quantock Hills.

Kingston, in connection with some of the surrounding parishes, boasts of an enterprising and flourishing Agricultural Association for the promotion of the farming interests and the encouragement of worthy labourers.

The church is a beautiful, large and lofty edifice, dedicated to Saint Mary. It consists of nave, North and South aisles, elegant porch (with fan roof and pierced battlements), and chancel. A wing or transept has lately been added on the North side of the chancel, to receive a new organ just erected by subscription. The church is principally built of rag stone, with dressings of Ham stone, in the Early English and Perpendicular styles, and is considered to have been founded (or considerably altered) in or about the thirteenth century. The pillars of the nave are circular, supporting heavy pointed arches. Those of the chancel are moulded, with small arches. The font is of noble proportions. The modern carved work in this church is unusually rich, and the old deserves particular notice, some of it bearing the date of 1522. The pulpit is of Italian design, similar to those at Bradford and Monkton. The East window is of stained and painted glass; subject, "The Crucifixion." There are corresponding windows on each side. The old oak bench-ends are beautifully carved, and are much admired. Illustrations of them may be seen in a Volume of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. This church has undergone restoration on several occasions. Many of the seats appear to be in their original state. There is a handsome window, with crests, in the Warre aisle. There are also several hatchments of that family. The church possesses an old lectern, with an ancient volume chained to it, quite a curiosity. There are memorials of the following families:—Chapman, Middleton, Beauchamp, Camplin, Bampfylde, Stewart, Cogan, Warre, &c. In the Warre aisle is a noble alter tomb of that family, on the South side of the chancel. There are some curious old brasses. The tower is a splendid example of architecture, and is surmounted by pinnacles, and ornamented with sculpture. It has a clock and a peal of six bells, and a handsome turret, with a low spire on the North side.

The parish register dates from A.D. 1667.

Ecton, in his *Thesaurus*, says that the gift of the tithes of Kingston formerly belonged to the Priory of Taunton.

The living is a vicarage, of the annual value of £200.

The rent-charge, with residence and two acres of glebe, is in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Bristol. The Rev. Eccles J. Carter, M.A., of Exeter College, Oxford, is the present vicar. He is the author of a volume called "Christian Gravestones." The living is endowed with £400 private benefaction, £300 Royal bounty, and £700 Parliamentary grant. The tithes have been commuted for a rent-charge of about £600.

The vicarage is facing the church, and is unworthy this rich and populous village.

Near are parochial schools.

The churchyard contains memorials of one or more members of the following families:—Maynard, Cornish, Coles, Beauchamp, Hucklebridge, Middleton, Boon, Farthing, Welsh, Edwards, Bennett, Lindsay, Wescombe, Cogan and Bult. There is a fine old yew tree. It is said that at the North-West corner of the churchyard the Warre family formerly possessed a stable, in which they placed their horses during the time of Divine service.

The charities are £20 per year, devoted to the teaching of poor children.

Kingston seems rich in benefactions to the poor, judging from the number of plates or boards placed in the tower.

The Independents have a large chapel on the Bagborough road.

The parish of Kingston lies on the juncture of the new red sandstone with the Devonian rock. The soil varies. It is generally gravelly, loamy or sandy, and produces good average crops. Copper mines were formerly worked in this parish, and an attempt was made a few years ago to work others about one mile North of the church. The name "Lodes" is yet retained to a farm. A considerable trade is carried on at Kingston in the malt and brewery business. There are quarries of stone, locally called rag stone, on the North side of the church. Good gravel and sand are also dug here. Near Tar Farm is a purple slate (verging to green), the dip being upwards of 70 degrees South.

The greater part of the tithings of Kingston belong to the customary manor of Taunton Deane.

This parish is noted for the superior quality of the cider made here, large quantities of which are exported. The Kingston black apples are well-known in this part of the county.

There was formerly a considerable trade done at Kingston in tanyard goods.

There is a clear stream that descends from Buncombe Hill, and turns several grist mills.



The views from this part of the parish are delightful—

"Whence many a bursting stream auriferous plays;  
Majestic woods of every vigorous green,  
Stage above stage, high waving o'er the hills,  
Or to the far horizon wide diffused,  
A boundless, deep, immensity of shade."

The hills are very beautiful, especially in the Summer time, when the rich colours of the numerous wild flowers cannot fail to strike the attention of a visitor.

The chief landowners are Miss Warre, E. H. C. Herbert, Esq., and E. J. Esdaile, Esq.

The principal seats are Hestercombe House, occupied by Miss Warre; Kingston Grange, the residence of C. F. Perkins, Esq.; Taunton House, the property of W. E. Surtees, Esq.; and Tetton House, pleasantly seated in an extensive and beautiful park.

Hestercombe, formerly called Hasecumbe, deserves notice. It stands on rising ground, at the foot of the Quantock Hills.


In the time of King Edward the Confessor this estate was part of the possessions of the Abbey of Glastonbury; but William the Conqueror took it from the church and

gave it to the Bishop of Coutancey. It was afterwards in the possession of the Bishops of Winchester, as part of their manor of Taunton, and came into the hands of the Warre family in the reign of Henry III.

There was formerly a chapel at Hestercombe, which, being very ruinous, was taken down a short time previous to the end of the last century. Among the relics preserved in this fine old family residence is the celebrated sword formerly belonging to John of France, taken at Poitiers in 1356 by Johann La Warre. The pictures are considered fine, and deserve attention.

Kingston is in the hundred of Taunton Deane, in the magisterial division and County Court district of Taunton. Returns two guardians to the Taunton Union. The nearest money-order office is at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 8 a.m.; may be posted at Kingston until 4.45 p.m. The nearest railway-station is at Taunton. Kingston is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese of Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £7,585; the county rate was £7,611. Its area is 3,349 acres. The population in 1831 was 902; in 1861 it was 892.

## Kittisford.

ITTISFORD is a rural parish and small village, situated 12 miles from Taunton, 4 miles North-West of Wellington station. It was formerly called Chedesford, and probably derived its name from some connection with a ford on the river Tone, which is adjoining.

At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"William holds of Roger Chedesford. Osmund Stramum held it in the time of King Edward . . . It was worth 40 shillings, now 60 shillings." This William, it appears, having no other name, assumed that of De Kittesford, and the manor passed to the possession of the Sydenhams, Blewets, &c.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Cothay, where are the ruins of an old abbey, described hereafter, and Kittesford Barton, both well worth seeing. The manor house of Cotehaye is commonly known as Cotehaye Abbey. It is a perfect residence of the 8th Henry's reign, without alteration. It was no doubt at one

time much larger, the left-hand wing of the gatehouse and one of the arches of the gate having been removed. In what is now the parlour is a fine mantel-piece of the time of James II., and the room, although built at the same time as the rest of the building, was probably altered in that reign. The remains of this fine old building are converted into a farm-house. There is a handsome old archway at the entrance, with a circular staircase, and some old stone buildings, with good buttresses.

The church is an old edifice, dedicated to St. Nicholas, and consists of nave, chantry, porch, aisle and chancel. It is principally built of red sandstone, in the Perpendicular style, and is considered to have been built (or considerably altered) in or about the 15th century. It is in a bad state of repair, and reflects no credit on the parishioners. There is a good old font. A neat harmonium is provided in the chancel. The peculiarities of this church, which deserve particular notice, are the pillars and arches, which, instead of being of stone as in all other churches, are here of oak. The pulpit is abominable. The

windows are "debased," and are in a bad state. In fact the old church greatly requires restoration, especially the "flint pitching" inside the principal doorway. The benches appear original. All the seats are free. The chancel was restored (at a cost of nearly £300) by the present rector in the year 1864, hoping the example would influence the parish. The church contains monuments of the Escott and Webber families. There was formerly a screen. A curious old stoup deserves attention. There are two brasses (now at the rectory). It is proposed to repair them. The tower is substantial, with a good arch doorway and window, with turret on North side. The tower has a peal of three bells. The buttresses are very heavy.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value, tithe rent-charge, of £125, with residence and 104 acres of glebe, in the gift of trustees, and held by the Rev. J. Caulfield Brown, M.A. It formerly belonged to Miss Escott.

The Rectory is adjoining, and is a large house, considerable additions having lately been made. There is a Sunday school here.

The churchyard contains crosses and monuments to the memory of the families of the Corners, Burstons and others.

Kittisford lies partly on the Devonian series of rocks and partly upon the new red sandstone and alluvium. The subsoil is red shillet. The soil is clay, and produces chiefly wheat, barley and roots.

There are quarries of red conglomerate and shale stone on the rectory grounds. Sand and clay are also dug here.

The lord of the manor is R. C. T. Pearce, Esq.

The river Tone runs through this parish.

The chief landowners are R. T. C. Pearce, Esq., John Spurway, Esq., and the executors of the late Miss Waldron.

The parish is generally hilly. There are numerous beautiful and fertile valleys, with fine scenery and commanding views from the surrounding heights.

Kittisford is in the hundred of Milverton, in the magisterial division and county court district of Wellington, and returns one guardian to the Wellington Union. The polling-place is at Wiveliscombe. Letters arrive from Wellington early. Kittisford is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 962 acres; called 898 acres in 1840. Population in 1831, 171; in 1857, 155; in 1860 it was 133.

## Langford Budville.



LANGFORD BUDVILLE is a fine healthy parish and village, situated 8 miles West of Taunton, 1½ miles North-West of Wellington railway station, 4½ miles from Wiveliscombe. It was formerly called Langeford or Longford, and probably derives its name from a long ford over the Tone, and is said to have taken its second name from a family called Budville, or Botteville. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"The King holds Langeford; Godwin held it in the time of King Edward. . . . There is a mill of seven and sixpence. . . . The whole yields 4 pounds 12 shillings." This village gave the name to a family, of whom Sir Thomas de Langford, Knight, was lord of the manor in the reign of Edward III.

The hamlets of Wellesford and Harpford are in this parish.

Several good springs of water rise on its hills. There was formerly a fulling-mill here, which afforded considerable employment to many hands.

The church is a handsome old building, the dedication of which is uncertain, some ascribing it to St. James, others to St. Peter; but the latter seems most likely, from the date on which the revel is held. It consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch and chancel, and is principally built of hard red sandstone of the Perpendicular date of Gothic architecture. It is considered to have undergone many changes, the principal part of the present edifice having been erected in the 16th century. There is a niche for the patron saint over the porch-arch. The church was newly seated in 1844. The only thing that appears peculiar in its construction or that deserves particular notice is the banding of the pillars. The pulpit was erected in 1844 of Caen stone. The organ that is at present in the church is lent by E. A. Sanford, Esq. It is in a richly-carved case, of French design, and originally belonged to the old mansion at Chipley Park. The new North aisle was added in 1866 by Henry Warre, Esq. The nave of this church was restored in 1844, principally



by subscriptions. Most of the seats are free. It is now proposed to restore the chancel.

Langford appears to have formerly been the residence of many good old families.

The church contains memorials of members of the following:—Bacon, Webber, Haviland, Gardiner, Cole, Wade and Trevellian. There are no brasses, but one handsome memorial window.

The tower is massive. It has a clock and a peal of five bells. The view from its summit well repays the trouble of ascending.

The parish register dates from 1538.

The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £156, with two acres of glebe land; in the gift of the Archdeacon of Taunton, and held by the Rev. T. H. Sotheby.

The great tithes are worth £240 a-year, and are owned by the Rev. — Turner.

A new parsonage has just been erected on the South-West side of the church.

There are mixed National schools, also a Sunday school.

The churchyard contains the parish stocks, the remains of an old cross, and monuments to the memory of the Parson, Phillips, Denham, Gardener, Cole, Hitchcock, Croxal, Richards, Rowsell and Even families.

There are no annual charities.

Langford Heathfield is a rough, open common, on high ground, from whence magnificent views of the Vale of Taunton Deane, the Quantock and Black Down Hills, and the distant heights of Exmoor, may be obtained.

The soil is mostly clay and sand, the subsoil sandstone, &c., and produces chiefly wheat and barley; but other crops are also grown in considerable variety.

Langford Budville stands upon the new red sandstone series of rocks. There are numerous quarries of hard red conglomerate stone; also pits of good sand.

E. A. Sanford, Esq., is lord of the manor.

The principal timber of this neighbourhood is beech, but most kinds flourish well.

A revel was formerly held on the first Sunday after St. Peter's Day, at which time some strange old customs took place, among others that of "Clipping the Tower," as it was locally called; in other words, all bystanders held hand by hand until there were sufficient to enclose the building.

The Great Western Canal and the river Tone run near the foot of the parish.

In our youth we remember a well-known, quaint old character who was known by all the country round as "Blind Sam." Although deprived of sight, Sam was a carrier by trade, and the cleverest hand to find reprobate donkeys which strayed off the common in this part of the country. He would go upon the hills, and, selecting what he considered the likeliest spot, imitate the braying of that well-known patient animal until he would call all those in the neighbourhood, and then he would quietly feel all, and, as he knew all, would find the lost one if there.

The chief landowners are E. A. Sanford, Esq., and the Rev. — Coles.

The principal seats are Bendon, occupied by H. Warre, Esq., and Wellesford, the residence of the Rev. — Coles.

Nearly the whole of the parish of Langford Budville is situated on high, hilly ground, commanding extensive and lovely views both of Somerset and Devon. It is on the main road from Wellington to Milverton and Wiveliscombe.

Langford is in the hundred of Milverton; magisterial division and County Court district of Wellington. Returns one guardian to the Wellington Union. The polling-place is at Wiveliscombe. Nearest money-order office at Wellington. Letters arrive from Wellington at 7.30 a.m.; may be posted at Langford until 5.20. The nearest railway-station is Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter line. Langford Budville is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 1,858 acres; but returned in 1840 as 1,728 acres. Collinson states the population in 1791 to be 520; in 1831 it was 608; in 1851 it was 577; in 1861 it was 457.

## Lyng, or East Lyng.



IS a long narrow parish and small village, situated  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles North-East of Taunton, near the rivers Tone and Parret. It was formerly called Lenge or Lney, derived probably from a corruption of the termination of Athelney. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"The church itself holds Lenge. . . . It is worth forty shillings." At this time it was in the possession of the Abbots of Athelney. It was formerly a parcel of the possessions of the Saxon princes. In the year 937 King Athelstan, for the sake of his soul and the soul of his grandfather Alfred, granted to God and the church of St. Peter, of Athelney, all the land then called Relengen. Lyng is bounded by the Northern bank of the river Parret. The situation is low, being surrounded by the moors, which contain no peat, heath or sedge like those on the North of Polden.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—West Lyng, 1 mile West of the church; Outwood, nearly 2 miles West; Boroughbridge, about 2 miles Eastward. The name of this place is variously spelt. Probably it is Barrow bridge, from the hill; or, possibly, Barrow, near the junction of the Tone and Parret. This has all the appearance of having been made. The stiff clay of which it is composed is not like anything in the neighbourhood, and relics have often been found here. On the summit are the ruins of an old chapel, which ruins were much injured when the place was garrisoned with 120 men by Goring, and a most determined defence was made.

The church of East Lyng is a small, ancient edifice, dedicated to St. Bartholomew, and consists of nave, porch and chancel. It is principally built of lias stone, in the Gothic style of architecture, and is considered to have undergone many changes at various times. The font is exceedingly rude, and looks very ancient. It has the appearance of being of Saxon construction. The old oak bench-ends are very quaintly carved with numerous strange figures, and deserve particular notice. The pulpit appears constructed of similar work, with a richly-carved cornice. The windows are of various dates and styles. The chancel has been lately fitted with new oak stalls.

All the seats of the church are free, and most of them have the original benches. There is a small piscina and a large ancient sedilia, with handsome arched head. On the North side is appended the staircase to the ancient rood-loft. The church contains a monument of the Gatoombe family. It would appear quite time that some restoration should take place, judging by the fusty smell, as of decaying materials. There are no brasses or stained glass. The tower is considered very handsome. It has an open quatrefoil crest, ornamented battlements and pinnacles, a clock and a peal of bells. A fine view of the flat country can be obtained from its top. There is also a district church at Boroughbridge, erected about 25 years ago. It is a plain, neat building, erected before the revival of Gothic architecture, or at least before real Gothic was understood and practised. It contains tall lancet windows, a bell-turret and a bell, and a small chancel, with triplet windows. The old church at Boroughbridge is on the adjoining hill. There is a small square battlemented tower, with four pinnacles. The hill on which the church is built is considered by some to be a barrow, and probably gives name to the place. In the top of Lyng Church two of the bells from old Boroughbridge Chapel were deposited; the other bell was sent to Middlezoy, and since sold.

The living is a vicarage, of the annual value of £121 and 21 acres of glebe, in the gift of R. K. M. King, Esq. The Rev. Henry Wood, M.A., of Oxford, is the present vicar.

The tithes are owned by R. K. M. King, Esq.

The vicarage is at Boroughbridge.

There are National and Sunday schools.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of Phillips, Butter, Cox, Dibble, Sullivan, Smith, Burt and Gatoombe families.

In this parish are extensive moors, which are divided by ditches fringed with willows. The muddy slime of the rivers furnishes excellent manure. This parish is the extreme Eastern boundary of our "Valley of the Tone."

The subsoil is alluvium; the soil is rich, and produces chiefly grass.

Cheese is made here to a considerable amount.



Richard Gatecombe, Esq., is lord of the manor.

The junction of the rivers Parret and Tone is the little island of Athelney, formerly called Æthelingey (or Isle of Nobles), famous as the retreat of Alfred the Great during a Danish invasion. In commemoration of the event King Alfred founded a monastery for Benedictines, A.D. 888; but it is now totally destroyed, and evidences of its former existence are occasionally turned up by the plough in the shape of tessellated tiles, &c. By far the most important is the celebrated relic known as King Alfred's jewel, now deposited in the Ashmolean Museum, at Oxford. In order to commemorate this spot, so rich in historical association, Sir John Slade, the late owner of the property, erected a monument in 1801, with a suitable inscription.

The following is the account given of this place by Collinson:—

Between this hamlet and the church of Lyng is the famous isle of Athelney, being a spot of rising ground on the North side of Stanmoor, bounded on the North-West by the river Tone, over which there is a wooden bridge, still called Athelney Bridge. The name given by the Saxons to this island was Ædelinga Igge, or the Isle of Nobles—by contraction Athelney.

This spot, which was anciently environed with almost impassable marshes and morasses, will be ever memorable for the retreat of King Alfred from the fury of the Danes, who in tumultuous numbers had overrun the Eastern part of his dominions. The register of Athelney sets forth that Alfred, after having bravely encountered his enemies for nine successive years, was at length reduced to the necessity of fleeing from them and taking refuge in the little isle of Athelney. The place that lodged him was a small cottage belonging to St. Athelwine, formerly a hermit here, the son of King Kynegilfus. After his emersion from this retirement and the total defeat of his enemies, Alfred founded a monastery for Benedictine monks on the spot which had given him shelter, and dedicated the same to the honour of St. Saviour and St. Peter the Apostle, appointing John the first abbot, and endowing the establishment with the whole isle of Athelney, exempt from taxes and all other burdens, with common pasture and free ingress and egress in Stathmoor, Saltmoor, Haymoor and Carrymoor, and all other moors within his manor of North Curry. He likewise gave ten caffates or hides of land in Long Sutton, with all meadows, pastures, rivers and all other appurtenances whatsoever, which benefactions were afterwards confirmed to the monks, and many others added thereto by different kings and nobles.

William of Malmsbury gives us a romantic account of

this island and monastery. "Athelney," says he, "is not an island of the sea, but is so inaccessible, on account of bogs and the inundations of the lakes, that it cannot be got to but in a boat. It has a very large wood of alders, which harbours stags, wild goats, and other beasts. The firm land, which is only two acres in breadth, contains a little monastery and dwellings for monks. Its founder was King Alfred, who, being driven over the country by the Danes, spent some time here in secure privacy. Here in a dream St. Cuthbert appearing to him, and giving him assurance of his restoration, he avowed that he would build a monastery to God. Accordingly he erected a church, moderate indeed as to size, but as to method of construction singular and novel, for four piers, driven into the ground, support the whole fabric, four circular chancels being drawn round it. The monks are few in number, and indigent; but they are sufficiently compensated for their poverty by the tranquillity of their lives and their delight in solitude."

Some allusion to the vision of St. Cuthbert above-mentioned is supposed to have been intended by a little curious amulet of enamel and gold, richly ornamented, that was found in 1693 in Newton Park, at some distance Northward from the abbey. On one side of it is a rude figure of a person sitting crowned, and holding in each hand a sceptre surmounted by a lily, which Dr. Hickes and other antiquaries have imagined to be designed for St. Cuthbert. The other side is filled by a large flower, and round the edge is the following legend:—Aelfred Mee Heit Gevcrean; that is, Alfred ordered me to be made. This piece of antiquity is now in the museum at Oxford.

Respecting the abbey the before-mentioned writer thus speaks:—

The abbey buildings are supposed, from various parts of them that have been discovered at different times, to have been very magnificent. In 1674 some labourers, employed by Captain Hacker to remove part of the ruins, disclosed a very ancient sepulchre of well-wrought stone, containing the skull of the deceased, the os ilium, and a small fragment of cloth. The inside of this receptacle was singularly contrived, the bottom being excavated, or scooped out, so as to admit the several parts of the body. They afterwards discovered the foundation of the ancient church, which stood on the top of the hill to the North-East, and there found bases of pillars, elegant tracery-work of windows, and divers pieces of sculptured free-stone, still retaining the marks of paint and gold. The labourers were said to have likewise found at the same time a large spur of gold, which they privately disposed of for their own benefit. In digging up some other of

the ancient ruins, about sixty yards from the present farmhouse Northward, the workmen discovered a vault eight feet square and seven high, containing three human skulls. The stone of the arch and side walls being taken away, the cavity was filled up, covering the skulls with earth. Fourscore yards from this funereal spot stood a chapel, the ruins of which were removed about the same period.

The conventual church was partly rebuilt in 1321, and an indulgence of twenty days granted to the contributors thereto. Not a vestige now remains of this once famous pile, the field on which it stood being converted into tillage. The whole island contains about one hundred acres, and forms a compact farm of about equal portions of arable and pasture. A farm-house has been erected near its Southern extremity.

Specimens of the encaustic tiles found on the site of this venerable and ancient abbey may be inspected at the Museum of the Somerset Archaeological Society, at Taunton.

There is a fair held once in each year in Lyng, the first Monday in August, also one at Boroughbridge on the last Tuesday in March, and another the last Tuesday in August.

Lyng Court House is at Higher Lyng.

The chief landowners are Sir Alfred Slade, Bart., Thomas Mulling, Richard Meade King, and — Perrott, Esqrs.

This parish is also noted for having in it three churches, although the population is under 400. One is certainly a ruin. The Yeovil line of railway passes through the village. The Durston station is about one and a half miles distant. The canal from Creech to Chard also crosses this parish, but is not now used.

East Lyng is in the hundred of Andersfield; in the magisterial division of Bridgwater and County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Bridgwater Union. In the highway district of Taunton. The polling-place is at Bridgwater. Nearest money-order office at North Curry. Letters arrive from Taunton at 10.20 a.m.; may be posted at Lyng until 3.30. The nearest railway-station is Durston, on the Bristol and Exeter line. Lyng is in the Archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Assessed to poor-rate at £4,206. Its area is 1,409 acres. The population in 1791 was 340; in 1831 it was 365; in 1861 it was 390.

## Lydeard St. Lawrence.



LYDEARD ST. LAWRENCE is an extensive parish, and neat and large village, situated eight miles North-West of Taunton, and five miles from Wiveliscombe. It was formerly called Lidiard, from the British verb *lledianno*, to grow wide, and derives its second name from St. Lawrence, second Archbishop of Canterbury and successor of St. Augustine, A.D. 604. At the time of the Norman Survey, by William I., it was thus described in Domesday-book:—"William himself holds Lidiard, Alric held it at the time of King Edward. . . It was and is worth seven pounds."

The Mohuns of Dunster were the early owners of this manor. It passed on to the Francis, of Coombe Florey. The Whiteleys were afterwards the owners; then the Duke of Somerset, afterwards the Sellecke and Hancock families.

The village lies in a beautiful valley to the South of the Quantocks. The scenery around is very beautiful. Near is Coombe Wood, a lovely spot, formerly a favourite meet of the hounds. The following hamlets or places are also in this parish:—Westowe, to the North of the church; Holford, two miles North-East; Corsley, one mile East; Nethercott, one and a half miles to the East; Pyleigh, formerly the property of the Flory family; Chipleigh, where was formerly a chapel; Deane, three miles to the South; Hookham, two and a half miles to the South; West Leigh and Tarr.

Lydeard St. Lawrence is in a beautiful position, commanding a fine view of the dark Quantock hills, and in particular of the Will's Neck, the highest point of the range, 1,270 feet above the level of the sea, and the great offshoot of Exmoor. This village was the birthplace of Thomas Manton, a learned writer and Noncon-



formist divine, whose works fill five vols. folio; born 1620.

The Church is a large, lofty and handsome building, standing on rising ground at the South end of the village, and dedicated to St. Lawrence. It consists of nave, porch, North aisle, chancel and transept. The church is handsomely battlemented, and is principally built of grey sandstone, in the Decorated style of Gothic architecture, and is considered to have been greatly altered in or about the fifteenth century. It is said that the chancel is mostly of the fourteenth century architecture, mixed up with portions of Saxon work. The font is massive and old. There is an ancient arched sedilia on the South side. The chancel, which is lofty, with handsome arches unto transept, deserves particular notice. The pulpit, desk and sounding-board are of oak, of the Elizabethan age. There are two mutilated Gothic screens. The windows are large, with decorated heads. The caps of the pillars are somewhat original, and each of a different pattern. The church much requires restoration, which would, if judiciously done, make it one of the finest country churches in the West of England. (Since the above was written this work is in progress.) There is a small harmonium. The benches are original, and in tolerable preservation, with the "drapery" panel and shields, &c. A peculiarity of this church is that it has handsome North and South porches. It contains monuments of the Goodwin, Brickenden and Caxford families. The tower is embattled with eight pinnacles, and turret on North side. It has a clock and a peal of five bells. On the North side of the Church is also a turret to the ancient rood-loft. The parish register dates from 1573. The living is rectorial, of the net annual value of £328, with residence and 67 acres of glebe land, in the gift of Robert Harvey, Esq. The Rev. James Crosse, M.A., of St. Alban's Hall, Oxford, is the present rector. The presentation formerly belonged to the Priory of Taunton. Adjoining are schools for boys and girls. There is also a Sunday school.

The churchyard, which is large, is planted with rows of beech trees, and contains the remains of a small cross, and monuments to the memory of the following families :—Hancock, Stevens, Bosley, Venn, Davis, Barley, Cully-

ford, Boucher, Totterdell, Daw, Chilcott, Norman, Comer, Williams, Westcott, Hall, Ridlen and Pearse.

The charities are only five shillings a-year.

The Dissenters have a chapel here, and also a Sunday school.

The understratum of Lydeard St. Lawrence is the new red sandstone. The soil is sandy, and produces excellent crops, under good management. The country around is beautiful and well wooded, especially with beech. Some of the views are very fine.

There are quarries of hard red sandstone. Sand is also dug here.

A flourishing agricultural society was formed here in the year 1860, and has done much good to the neighbourhood. Its meetings are held yearly, and attract much attention.

In 1666 a large urn full of Roman coins was found in this parish.

A revel or fair was formerly held on the 10th August.

A fine stream rises near the church, the water of which was for many years considered good for scrofulous disorders.

The chief landowners are P. Hancock, Esq., Mrs. Winter, Lord Ashburton and M. F. Bissett, Esq., J.P.

This parish is noted for a few antiquities that have been discovered here, showing early settlement. Among other articles was a flint arrow-head.

Lydeard St. Lawrence is in the hundred of Taunton Deane, Bishop's Lydeard division. County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The polling-place is at Wiveliscombe. The nearest money-order office is at Bishop's Lydeard. Letters arrive from Taunton at 8.20 a.m. May be posted at Lydeard until 4.20. Nearest railway-station, Bishop's Lydeard, on the West Somerset line.

Lydeard St. Lawrence is in the Deanery and Arch-deaconry of Taunton. Diocese Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £4,046. The county rate was £4,046. Its area is 2,700 acres; returned in 1840 as 2,677 acres. Collinson states the population in 1791 to be 350. In 1831 it was 654. In 1851 it was 711. In 1861 it was 664.



## Milverton.



MILVERTON is an unusually large parish, in a pleasant situation about seven and a half miles North-West of Taunton, sixteen miles South-West of Bridgwater, and three and a half from Wellington station. It was formerly called Milvertune, or Milvertone, and derives its name from Mill-ford-town, or Tone. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"The King holds the Manor of Milvertune. Bishop Giso held it in the time of King Edward . . . . There is a market, which pays ten shillings. The whole renders 25 pounds by tale . . . There is a mill of seven and sixpence rent." Judging by the amount paid in comparison with other places, Milverton must have been a place of considerable wealth and importance. For many years it held a good position, and is now the residence of many highly-respectable families. There are a few shops. It is well supplied with water. The neighbourhood is populous. It was formerly a Royal Borough, and is yet known as her Majesty's Borough of Milverton.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Preston-bower, Houndsmoor, Wickmoor, Screedhay, Bickley and Chipley, &c.

Milverton is on the high road from Taunton to Wiveliscombe.

From the Churchyard a fine view of Taunton Deane may be obtained.

A family named Bures, corrupted into Bowyer, formerly Lords of the Manor, gave the name to Preston-Bowyer, where was formerly a church; but no trace remains of it now.

There is some old oak tracery fixed in a malthouse by the road-side.

There was a church at Milverton in the days of William the Conqueror. Stephen was the chaplain, and there was land attached to the said building. Milverton church is a very fine old edifice, and has somewhat the appearance of what is called a quarter cathedral. It is dedicated to Saint Michael, and consists of nave, porch, North and South aisles, chancel and transept, on each side. The pillars are octagonal, supporting pointed arches, all of Bath

stone. The nave is chiefly in the Decorated style. In the West of the South aisle there is a lobby, in which the Archdeacon's court was held. The church is principally built of red conglomerate stone, in the Perpendicular style, and is considered to have been much altered in or about the sixteenth century. The Northern arcade of Milverton church is original, and deserves particular notice. It is in the Perpendicular style. The Southern side is a copy of the Northern. The pulpit is new, of stone, with the well-known inscription, "Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." The carved stall-ends of the seats are very beautiful. The windows are various in design, those on the South side being mostly stained. The organ is in a handsome oak case, and is fixed in the Northern transept. This church was restored and enlarged in 1849-50, by which 162 sittings were obtained. The total number of sittings are 763, of which 417 seats are free. Some of the old bench-ends are peculiar, and contain quaint carving. On one of them are the arms of Henry VIII. The font is large and massive, lead lined. At the West end of each aisle is a gallery for the school-children. The church contains monuments of the Broadmead, Harding, Handford, Spurway, Davidson, Trevor, Randolph, Rowcliffe, Cridland, Welsh, Richards, Lambe, Seaman, Atwood, Lancaster, Periam, Gardiner, Clarke, Poulet, Spreat and Steward families. The chancel is handsomely fitted up with carved oak stalls, the carving of which deserves attention. The chancel windows are of richly painted glass, containing full-length figures of the Apostles. The floors are paved with handsome mosaic. The altar is richly decorated. On the North side are a beautiful tomb and brass to the memory of a late vicar, the Rev. John T. Trevelyan. The gas-fittings are of brass, of elegant design. There is a warm-air apparatus. The vestry is on the North side, and is fitted up with handsome carved oak. There are numerous tablets, stating that Richard Westcombe, John Dibble, John Aishcombe, Mary Lambe and John Weekes made gifts to the poor. The tower, remarkably simple in appearance, has a clock and a beautiful peal of six bells. It is said that when Peter Richards was married he was so popular a man that the ringers rang for a week at a

guinea a day. From the tower top a magnificent view can be obtained of the surrounding country, especially of the Quantocks and the outlyers of Exmoor. Previous to the restoration of the church there was the gable for the ancient sancts bell over the nave of the church. This bell was formerly rung at the elevation of the Host in Roman Catholic times. There was also a staircase on the South side leading to the rood-loft. The tower was formerly covered with ivy, and presented a pretty and picturesque appearance.

The parish register dates from 1538.

The living is a vicarage, of the annual value of £425 gross commutation, with residence; in the gift of the Archdeacon of Taunton. The Rev. T. H. Sotheby, B.A., of Trinity College, Oxford, was the late vicar.

In 1839 Mrs. Betty Morgan gave £1,500 to establish a Sunday evening service.

The vicarage is near the church. Adjoining are endowed schools for boys, girls and infants, with house. There are also Sunday schools.

The churchyard contains the sculptured base of a cross, some fine cedars, the old parish stocks, and monuments to the memory of members of the following families:—Spurway, Rowcliffe, Gibson, Palfrey, Richards, Broadmead, Turnbull, Warren, Leakey, Trevor, Kidner, Boucher, Powell, Hewings, Steevens, Hunt, Bucknell, Horley, Slape, Granger, Hawkins, Tamlett, Holman, Tripe, and Chorley.

The old rectory house, adjoining the church, is said to have been erected by Cardinal Wolsey; but Mr. Parker thinks it must have been before he became Cardinal, as the arms bear no mitre. There is no cellar nor solar, but there is a hall with a dais, and a bay window at the back to contain the side-board. Behind the hall there is a passage leading from the servants' to the other apartments, the adoption of which would make the arrangements of the old houses suitable to our modern requirements. There is a stone staircase at the back leading to a long room extending through the whole of the first floor, which originally was probably the sleeping apartments for the family. The house is not the vicarage house of the parish, but the Archidiaconal residence, the great tithes being the property of the Archdeacon of Taunton, who is also the patron of the living.

The charities are worth £300 a-year, bequeathed by Mary Lamb and others for the education of the poor; Ascombe's charity, £36 per year, for aged poor; Pawlett's, of £29, among second poor, who have not received parish relief; and others of the value of about £15 per year. Painted boards giving an account of the various charities

in the parish are affixed in the West end of the church, and contain the following names:—Betty Morgan, Peter Richards, Jane Daniel, Eliza Cridland, John Pearce, John Dibble, Mary Lambe, Lucilla Maria Spurway, Richard Wescombe, John Aishcombe and John Weeks.

The Wesleyans have a chapel at Milverton, erected in 1850. The Independents have also a chapel.

The route from Taunton to Milverton is thus described in Murray's Hand-book—"It passes through a superb country, in the vicinity of the river Tone and its tributaries. The scenery is magnificent." The description of the road or line to Wellington by the same writer is equally flattering.

The soil is loamy, sandy subsoil, mostly the new red sandstone, and produces a large quantity of luxurious crops.

The old market-house of Milverton was a picturesque and antique building. As the market was given up and the place was useless, it was taken down some twenty years ago. In Pigott's collections of Somersetshire buildings a view may be seen. These drawings are now in the Museum of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society. The view was taken in 1841. It was octagonal in plan, with a high pitched roof, and a market-cross in the centre.

Formerly serges, druggets, woollens and flannels were manufactured at Milverton to a great extent; but the trade has been lost. It was succeeded by silk-throwsting; but little is now done in any way. There are quarries of hard red sandstone.

Milverton is lighted with gas by a company formed about eight years ago. The works are at the South-East corner of the town.

Milverton is the centre of a magisterial division. The petty sessions are held here occasionally. A court leet is held yearly, at which the various appointments are made. This has until lately been nearly all that has been done; but within the past year or so exertions have been made to enable this court to take cognizance of many local matters.

A revel or fair is held on the 10th of October. Formerly there was one on Easter Tuesday, the charter of which was given by Queen Anne. The river Tone runs to the South of this parish. The silk trade was formerly carried on at Preston, near Milverton.

Milverton, with Wiveliscombe, form a turnpike trust.

The subsoil in many places is limestone in conglomerate beds, which are much worn by abrasion, and contain some fossils.

There is a good agricultural association established in connection with Wiveliscombe and Wellington.

The principal seats are Milverton Court, occupied by Edward Fowler, Esq.; Olands House, P. Broadmead, Esq.;


Springrove, J. Spurway, Esq.; Lancaster Fort, the residence of C. Bowcliffe, Esq.; Thorn's House, W. Spurway, Esq.

The new Devon and Somerset Railway from Taunton to Barnstaple passes through Milverton. The railway-station will be at Ford-bridge, on the Eastern side of the town.

It was the birthplace of John de Milverton, a furious opponent of the doctrines of Wickliff, who died in 1480, and of Dr. Thomas Young, born 1773, who first established the undulatory theory of light and penetrated the obscurity of the Egyptian hieroglyphics. A bust to his memory has lately been erected at the Shire Hall, Taunton.

There is a Post-office savings bank. Milverton is in the hundred of Milverton, and magisterial division of Wiveliscombe and Milverton. County Court district of Wellington. Returns three guardians to the Wellington Union. The polling-place is at Wiveliscombe. Letters arrive from Wellington at seven a.m.; may be posted at Milverton until 8.25. Present nearest railway-station, Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter line. A carrier leaves for Wellington daily. Milverton is in the deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 5,000 acres. The population in 1821 was 1,930; in 1831 it was 223; in 1861, it was 1,896.

## Norton Fitzwarren

S a pleasant parish and village, situated two and a half miles North-west of Taunton and six miles North-east of Wellington. It was formerly called Nurton or Nortone (the place to the North of the Tone, or the North Town). It derives its second name from the Fitzwarren family, nine of whom at various times held the manor. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"Alured holds of the Earl Nortone. Osmond held it in the time of King Edward. . . . There are two mills of 11s. 3d. rent. Twenty-five acres of meadow, and forty acres of wood. It was worth £8, now fifteen pounds." It was subject to the customs of Taunton Deane. The Fitzwarrens were men of note from the Conquest to the Reformation, when the manor passed into other hands. Another manor in Norton, known as Norton Veel, passed through the De Viel, Berd, Hawkeford and Hawker families to that of the Welman.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Langford, a tithing three-quarters of a mile to the North. Vanhampton or Fenhampton, a small tithing half a mile to the West. This place is said to have derived its name from Vermin-harbour, the harbour of a great serpent—of which more hereafter. Fitzoy and Ford, 1½ miles to the North. Norton was, in all probability, a Romano-British station, and contained a pottery of that period. On the

cutting of the West Somerset Railway, in 1862, a large quantity of these pottery manufactures were found.

The church is a handsome edifice, and stands upon rising ground to the North of the village. It is dedicated to All Saints, and consists of nave, North aisle and chancel. There is a chapel or transept attached on either side, in one of which is an organ, erected a few years ago. The church is principally built of native hard coarse grey sandstone (supposed to have been taken from Knowle Hill), in the Decorated Gothic style of architecture, and is considered to have been founded (or considerably altered) in or about the fourteenth century. There appear remains of some Perpendicular work, and the general appearance, confirmed by tradition, is that this church has been rebuilt on several occasions. Tradition also imputes some of the alterations to a noted man named Tennyson. The font has the appearance of having been mutilated. Tradition again steps in, and ascribes its defaced condition to the act of the Puritans, who are also held answerable for certain injury done near the tower arch. It is proposed to erect a new font. The pulpit is of stone, with marble pillars. It is new, and very handsome. In the North wall was formerly a doorway and stairs that led into the gallery over the old rood-loft. These were removed about a century ago. The church was restored or rebuilt in 1841, principally by the exertions of the Rev. J. P. Hewett. The chancel was also rebuilt



in A.D. 1866, by the present rector. It contains a handsome stained glass window, erected to the memory of his father. There is also a beautiful stained memorial window on the South side, to the memory of Elizabeth Charter, and another to a member of the Keay family. The church contains an old monument of the Prowse family. Also a handsome new tablet to the memory of the late Sir John Slade, of Montys Court, in this parish. The old oak bench-ends are richly carved, and deserve especial notice. The chancel has a very beautiful appearance. The new oak stalls are handsomely carved. There is an old piscina on the South side, and a new credence-table opposite. The altar, with marble cross, deserves attention. Opposite the South porch entrance was formerly a door, which was said to have been used to take the bodies of those persons through who had died without receiving the Holy Sacrament, and who were interred on the North side of the churchyard. Previous to the restoration of this church it contained large square-headed windows, of a debased period and style. These were removed for others more appropriate.

The tower is an old embattled building, decorated with numerous grotesque carvings. It has a peal of five remarkably fine bells, similar in tone to the peal of St. Mary's, Taunton.

The screens are very curious and richly-carved pieces of mediæval work, and have been lately restored. They contain the names of the churchwardens at the time of their erection, but no date.

The North side of the churchyard was for some years unused. It was found covered with the débris of an earlier church, many of the stones being of large size. At a considerable depth below the surface a few bones have been found. At present there are about sixteen interments a-year.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of three hundred and fifty pounds, with residence and eight acres of glebe land; in the gift of Mrs. Hewett, of Norton Court. The Rev. J. P. Hewett, M.A., is the present rector.

The rectory is about half a mile to the West of the church.

The schools are supported by voluntary contributions.

On the South side of the church was formerly a space where the village sports took place, including wrestling, &c. The wake or revel was held on the first *Sunday* after the third of May. Near the church was the ancient paystone, on which the poor received their weekly dole.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of members of the following families:—Turner, Hewett, Slade, Charter, Guerin, North, &c.

Norton has the honour of being a Royal burial-place, for here are interred "The King and Queen of the Gipsies." There are no less than five headstones to the royal family of the Stanleys.

"The summit of the hill on the North of the parish church of Norton Fitzwarren, situated about two miles and a half North-West of the town of Taunton, is occupied by a very curious and remarkable earth-work. A foot-path from Norton church to the rectory leads up a rather steep ascent to the South-West side of the camp or town, which it enters by a wicket-gate, and passing on to the North-West side, leaves it by a similar gate. The rampart being broken through at both points, another path, branching off immediately within the entrenchment, leads to the North-Eastern boundary, which it passes through by a gate now used for farming purposes. Besides these gates, four others are very evident. As to those on the North, West and South sides, there can be no doubt, the deep excavations which formed the avenues to them being still in existence, though now occupied by trees and brush wood, while that leading to the Eastern entrance, though nearly obliterated by the plough, may still be traced through the fields in the direction of Staplegrove. The Western gate appears to have had two entrances, the space between which was probably occupied by a fortification for the defence of what was evidently the principal entrance to the place. The rampart consists of a deep ditch of irregular breadth, with an external and internal vallum, and is still perfect in the greater part of its extent; though the outer vallum has been destroyed in some parts, and the whole rampart from the Western gate to the wicket leading to the rectory is nearly obliterated. The area contained within the ramparts is about thirteen acres, and has so long been under cultivation that all traces of its original contents have disappeared, with the exception of hollows leading from the four gates towards the centre of the area, which is more particularly remarkable at the Eastern entrance, where it is sufficient to act as a drain for the surface water of the enclosure. Many and various have been the conjectures of neighbouring antiquaries as to the original constructors of this curious earth-work and the purpose for which it was erected. As usual in such cases, the general voice has given it in favour either of the Romans or the Danes. Popular tradition says that it was once the haunt of a fierce and gigantic serpent, which having been generated from the corruption of many dead bodies which lay there, spread terror and death through the neighbourhood, some of whose ravages are said to be portrayed in the carving of the beautiful rood screen of the parish church. The reason for supposing Norton to

have been a permanent British town is this: There is still in existence a portion of an ancient trackway, probably paved in after times by the Romans, leading from the British village Byng Ny Pwl, or the Village on the Water, now corrupted into Bathpool, round the base of Creech-borough hill to the turnpike-road near the old brickyard from which it probably proceeded across the vale to the undoubtedly British fortification of Castle Neroche. Now, from certain indications on the ground, slight though they certainly are, it seems likely that a branch of this trackway crossed the river Thone at Obridge, or the old bridge, near the spot where the back stream from the Fire-pool (at that time the main stream) is crossed by a wooden foot bridge at its confluence with the present navigable river. Now, a line drawn from this spot through Plaice-street, the name of which indicates that a road existed there in the time of the Romans, would lead very nearly to the Eastern entrance of Norton camp, and probably did actually lead there. It must be remembered that neither the locks at the end of the Priory fields nor the mills at Bathpool existed at the time of which we are speaking, and that consequently the river at Obridge must have been much less deep and more easily forded than it is in these days."

The encampment on the hill was in connection with Cothelstone, Rowbarrow, Broomfield and Castle Neroche.

The Independents have a neat chapel, enlarged in 1862; also a school.

Norton lies on the new red sandstone formation, the lower parts of the parish alluvial. The soil is rich sandy loam, subsoil marl and gravel. It produces an excellent crop. About half a mile from the Church, on the Hele road, are two immense pits, said to have been sunk for the purpose of excavating marl for farm-dressing. They are locally known by the extraordinary names of Heaven and Hell. They are very picturesque, being covered with foliage.

The Manor House adjoins the church, and is a fine, ancient building. The hall is large, and deserves notice, as well as the ancient grotesque stone lions at the entrance gates. There are escutcheons of the Prowse family, who formerly occupied it. It was at one time the seat of the Earls Fitzwarren. Attached to Norton rectory is the Manor of Wooney. The Rev. J. P. Hewett is lord of this manor.

Charles Welman, Esq., of Norton Manor, is lord of the manor of Norton, which was divided into three tithings.

There was formerly a considerable flax trade carried on

here, until about forty years ago, when a large fire occurred and consumed the buildings.

A capital agricultural association is established at Norton. The meetings are held in the New Assembly-room, at the village inn, where concerts and other entertainments take place.

The principal trade of Norton is its brewery. Large quantities of malt liquor are sent to distant places. There are also extensive starch mills, where a considerable trade is carried on.

It is hoped that Norton will soon possess a railway-station; for near the village is the junction of the West Somerset line from the Bristol and Exeter. The Devon and Somerset line will also branch off close by.

The hill behind the church commands a fine view.

The river Tone passes to the South of the village; also the Grand Western Canal, which is now being destroyed.

The chief landowners are C. N. Welman, Esq., Lady Slade, W. H. Hewett, Esq., and Mrs. Hewett.

The principal seats are Montys Court, erected in 1840 by General Sir John Slade, Bart.; Norton Manor, the beautiful property of C. N. Welman, Esq.; Courtlands, the residence of H. Gover, Esq., LL.D.; and Norton Court, Mrs. Hewett.

The parish is noted for its antiquity. The well-known old saying is probably true, and refers to this place:—

"When Taunton was a fuzzy down,  
Norton was a market town."

If so, times have greatly altered.

Norton is on the main road from Taunton to Milverton and Wiveliscombe, and is situated in a rich and prosperous neighbourhood.

A capital mill stream from Milverton washes the village.

There was formerly a charity of five shillings per year each to eight of the oldest men in the parish, to buy tools; but it has been lost for many years.

Norton is in the hundred of Taunton Deane; in the magisterial division and County Court district of Taunton; returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district and polling-place is also at Taunton; nearest money-order office—Taunton or Bishop's Lydeard; letters arrive from Taunton at eight a.m., may be posted at Norton until 5.30. Nearest railway-station, Taunton or Lydeard. Norton is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton; Diocese, Bath and Wells. The rateable value in 1867 was £4,692; the county rate £4,704. Its area is 1,300 acres, but returned in 1840 as 1,263. The population in 1821 was 475; in 1836 it was 545; in 1860 it was 635.



## Monksilver.



**M**ONKSILVER is a parish and village situate 14 miles North-West of Taunton, three miles of Williton, and seven North of Wiveliscombe. It was formerly called Silver, Selvre, or Selvere, and probably derives the first part of its present name from having been formerly the property of the Church. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described :—"Richard holds of Alured Selvre. Aluric held it in the time of King Edward. It was worth £3, now £4." In the time of the same occupiers the manor paid a customary rent of 18 sheep per annum to the King's manor at Williton. It then passed on to the family of the Candos. King Edward, at the dissolution of priories, gave it to the Collegiate Church of Windsor, the present holders.

The parish is situated in a deep valley, the turnpike-road between Taunton and Minehead passing through it.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish :—Woodford, one mile to the North ; Buchanger, half a mile to the West.

The church is a good and handsome edifice, dedicated to All Saints, and consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch and chancel. It is principally built of stone, in the Perpendicular style of architecture. It is battlemented, and has buttresses and pinnacles. The old rood-loft stair-turret is on the South side. The windows are large and handsome, as is usual in this style of Gothic architecture. The Church was entirely restored by the late rector (the Rev. W. F. Chilcott), at considerable cost. The fittings and various articles are of beautiful design, and reflect credit upon the parish.

The tower has battlements, buttresses, and a peal of five bells. In it is a clock, lately erected at the expense of Miss Gatchell, to the memory of her brother. The tower

contained an old clock for many years, but "time" had got the better of it.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £270, including a good residence, and 35 acres of glebe. In the gift of the Dean and Canon of Windsor, and held by the Rev. Thomas Cox. There are national schools.

The churchyard contains a splendid cross, lately erected to the memory of the Rev. W. F. Chilcott. It was paid for by public subscription. There are the remains of an old cross. There is also a stone to the memory of an old lady and her two daughters, who were inhumanly murdered in 1773.

The soil is sandy loam, the subsoil marl, and produces excellent crops of wheat, barley, oats, roots, &c.

James Notley, Esq., is lord of the manor.

A stream runs through the village, and turns a small mill.

From some parts of the parish, especially on the higher or hilly side, may be seen magnificent views of the surrounding country. A climb up some of the hills well repays the toil.

Meantime you gain the height, from whose fair brow  
The bursting prospect spreads immense around ;  
And snatch'd o'er hill and dale, and wood and lawn  
And verdant field, and darkening heath between.

Monksilver is in the hundred of Williton and Free-manors, magisterial division and County Court district of Williton, and returns one guardian to the Williton Union. The highway district, polling-place, and the nearest money-order office are also at Williton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 7.10 a.m. ; may be posted at Monksilver until 4.45. Nearest railway-station, Williton, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway. Is in the Deanery of Dunster ; in the Archdeaconry of Taunton ; Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 1,006 acres. The population in 1791 was 230 ; in 1821, 306 ; in 1831 it was 322 ; and in 1861 it was 304.



## North Curry



IS a very extensive parish and large village, situated seven miles North-East of Taunton, and twelve South-East of Bridgwater. It was formerly called Ohuri or Nort Curi, and was so named to distinguish it from Curry Rivel.

At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"The King holds Nort Curi, Earl Herald held it in the time of King Edward. . . . To this Manor belongs five burgesses in Langport, rendering 38 pence and eighteen servants, and 4 swineherds and two cottages. The whole renders twenty-four pounds of white money. There is a fishery, but it does not belong to the farm; and seven acres of vineyard."

The right of fishery is still reserved to a few persons.

North Curry is now very respectably inhabited, having many wealthy residents. At one time it was a place of some importance, and was known to the Romans. The parish is divided into these four hamlets or places:—Curry, Lillesdon, Wrantage and Knapp, formerly also Hillend and Moordon. Newport is a tithing of Wrantage, and formerly possessed the privilege of a corporate town. It is still called the borough of *Newport*. It formerly had a chapel attached to it. There seems little doubt that the whole of the moor country was formerly covered by the sea. The names *Creech*, a creek, and *Newport* (at some distance from the river), also *New Harbour*, between Creech and Curry, would seem relics of this fact.

North Curry church is a fine, large, ancient cruciform edifice, standing upon high ground, overlooking the moors. It is dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, and has been considered by some as a sort of quarter cathedral. It consists of nave, North and South aisles, and chancel. There are transepts attached on each side of the chancel. A church appears to have stood on the site before the Norman conquest. It was held by Bishop Marrice. The present church is principally built of blue lias stone, with Ham-stone dressings, in the Perpendicular style, and is considered to have been much altered in or about the sixteenth century. The South porch is handsome, with a

groined stone ceiling, richly-moulded arches, beautifully canopied, with the old sun-dial above them. The ancient ironwork of the South door is very good, and is well worth attention. The West end of the church presents an excellent appearance. The buttresses on the South side are very picturesque, heavy and peculiar in their design, and deserve particular notice. The pulpit is modern. It was fixed in 1836. The pillars and arches are also peculiar, having no capitals. On the North side of the church is a fine old doorway of the Norman period. The windows are large and handsome, mostly of the late Perpendicular period; but on the South of the tower they are very different, with a singular little buttress under them. This church is crowned with a richly-pierced quatrefoil parapet of Ham-hill stone, some parts with heavy battlements. All the seats are free except those apportioned to estates. This church underwent considerable alteration and was re-seated in 1835. The water from the roofs is discharged by massive gargoyles. There are monuments of the Gould, Mead, Coker, Hooper, Butt, Plowman, and Long families; also a parchment to the Long family. On the North and South sides of the chancel are two full-length stone figures, brought from the North aisle. There is also one brass, but little or no stained glass worthy of note. In the vestry is a large tablet fixed, giving an account of the ceremonies to be observed at King John's feast.

The tower is octagonal in shape, built at the intersection of the cross on handsome arches. It has a clock and a peal of six bells. There were formerly some low stairs on the exterior of the South side. From this tower a fine view may be obtained of the surrounding country. There is a good organ. The parish register dates from 1539.

The living is a discharge vicarage, of the annual value of £370, with residence, in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Wells, and was until lately in their entire jurisdiction. It was formerly held with the livings of Stoke St. Gregory and West Hatch, but is now separate. The rectorial tithes amount to £660, and are leased by the

Dean and Chapter of Wells to Charles H. Dare, Esq. The vicarage is opposite the church, and adjoining are capital schools for boys and girls, also a Sunday school.

The churchyard is large, and stands high, affording excellent views of the surrounding moors. It contains a fine avenue of trees, the remains of a small cross, and monuments to the memory of members of the following families:—Scott, Guidon, Andrews, Crease, Pocock, Gurnsey, Tattle, Wescombe, Foster, Hurman, Verrier, House, Payne, Bellringer, Smith, Hooper, Burnett, Derham, Tapp, Spearing, Hurdley, Goodwyn, Alloway, Miller, Pester, Howe, Woodward, Buncombe, Weton, Hurston, Weaver, Northcote, Webber, Coker and Burnett. The following inscription deserves notice:—"Here lies Doctress Ann Pounsberry. Stand still and consider the works of God."

The second poor receive the interest of £40, the remains of a larger sum now lost. There are several charities. Fifty pounds were left to the second poor by an unknown benefactor.

There is an assembly-room in the village, suitable for lectures, concerts, &c.

The Baptists and Wesleyans have each a chapel at North Curry. There is also a Wesleyan chapel at Ham, established about five years ago. A reading-room has been opened lately.

The parish of North Curry is extensive, and consequently covers various stratas, alluvium and the new red sandstone being the chief. The soil is stone-rush and clay, and produces good crops. There are large quantities of common land at Haymoor, Currymoor, West Sedgmoor and Westmoor. There are several respectable shops, and a good trade is done in the neighbourhood. There are quarries of sand and stone at Knapp. Flint is also found here. North Curry is divided into streets, Queen's-square forming the centre, which is a nice, open place.

The manor house is near the church, and in good preservation.

The Dean and Chapter of Wells are the lords of the manor.

There is a flourishing agricultural association at North Curry, embracing the parishes of Curry Mallet, Fitzhead, Thorn Falcon, Hatch Beauchamp and West Hatch.

A court was held formerly at the manor-house, but is now held at the late steward's. A bailiff is periodically appointed.

A fair is held on the first Tuesday in September, formerly on the first of August.

There are steam flour-mills at North Curry. The river Tone runs through this parish. North Curry had for many years a good market, and old inhabitants yet remember the four butchers in their shambles and the old corn market held under a large tree on the green.

The Chard canal ran by this parish, and at Wranstage are tunnels from which large quantities of good alabaster were taken. The canal is now useless.

In 1791 the inhabitants had a right of common on West Sedgmoor, Stanmore, Warmoor and West Wall.

The principal hills are those called Crimson and Rock, the former a favourite place for picnics, &c. From these heights good views of the levels can be obtained—

Lie stretch'd below, interminable meads,  
And vast savannas, where the wandering eye,  
Unfix'd, is in a verdant ocean lost.  
Another Flora there, of bolder hues,  
And richer sweets, beyond our garden's pride,  
Plays o'er the fields, and showers with sudden hand  
Exuberant joy.

The chief landowners are Mrs. Scott Gould, Gore Langton, C. H. Dare and P. Foster, Esqrs.

The principal seats are Moredon, on an eminence, and occupied by Mrs. Scott Gould; Whatleigh House, late the residence of Capt. Barrett; the Parsonage; Newport House, — Foster, Esq.

This parish is also noted for having had a market granted it by King John, which was continued until the year 1841, but is now given up, as before mentioned.

North Curry is situated on the main road from Taunton to Langport.

There is a curious custom observed here, called the Reeve's Feast, which by a statute of King John is to be provided by the Reeve and certain other tenants of the manor, some finding money, some wheat, &c., in proportion, on the day before Christmas, at which certain other tenants, called "The Jack of Slough" and "The Jack of Knapp" are to be masters of the ceremonies, and are to distribute portions of three bullocks and some loaves of bread, to be provided by the Reeve, among the tenants of the manor, in proportion to their holdings; and after preserving a portion for the feast, the remainder is to be given to the second poor of the parish. On the day after Christmas-day a feast is held, when an effigy of King John is placed on the table, serving as an ornament to an immense mince-pie. According to the charter a toast is to be drunk to the memory of King John, and liberty is given to drink until two candles of one pound weight each are burnt out.

North Curry is in the hundred of North Curry, and magisterial division and County Court district of Taunton. Returns two guardians to the Taunton Union. It is in the highway district of Taunton, and the polling-place is also there. There are a Post-office Savings' Bank and money-order office at North Curry. Letters arrive from Taunton at 7.45 a.m., and may be posted at North Curry until six p.m. The nearest railway-stations are Durston,

on the Bristol and Exeter railway, or Athelney, on the Yeovil line. A carrier leaves for Taunton and returns the same day. North Curry is in the Deanery and Arch-deaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £12,538. The county rate was £12,470. Its area is 5,557 acres, viz., Curry tithing, 1,913; Knapp, 1,311; Lilledon, 1,133; Wrantage, 1,200. The population in 1821 was 1,645; in 1831 it was 1,833; in 1861, 1,839.

## Nynehead



IS a scattered parish and small village, situated seven miles West of Taunton, one and a half miles North-West of Wellington, and was formerly called Nichehede, or Ninehead Flory. At the Norman Survey this manor was included in the account of those places which owed service to the Bishop of Winchester. It was afterwards part of the estate of the De Fluri family, then of the De Wyke. It was subject to the customs of Taunton Deane. Nynehead has been for many generations the residence of the Sanford family.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—East Ninehead, or Ninehead Monks, or Monkton, one mile to the East, and which formerly belonged to the monks of Taunton Priory, and Upcott, half a mile to the North.

The church is a small and very interesting edifice, dedicated to All Saints. It consists of nave, South aisle, chapel at the East end, and chancel. There is a transept abutting on the nave and a South porch. The church is in various styles of Gothic architecture, and is considered to have been built (or considerably altered) in or about the reign of Henry IV. The North aisle formerly belonged to the Acland family. The monuments in this church are very handsome, and deserve particular notice. There is a considerable portion of the old rood-screen remaining. The windows are mostly of the Perpendicular period, some beautifully glazed with stained glass. There is an early English piscina of good design in the chancel. This church was lately partially restored, and some new seats

were added. Many of the seats are free. A very curious incised stone, with three crosses of very ancient character, may be seen at the entrance into the chancel, and some sculpture of Early-English date was found in taking down the West wall of the South aisle, which proved that this aisle was an addition to the church. There is a neat organ under the tower. The church contains several handsome monuments of the Sanford, Clarke, Wick, Venner, and Wyatt families. At the South-East corner of the South aisle is a monument with effigies of a man and woman kneeling, with open books. It was erected to the memory of the Clarke family. This church also contains some very fine examples of Luca della Robbia ware, the Virgin and Child, and a very fine work in marble, by that rare master, Mino da Fiesole, representing the Holy Trinity; also a picture of our Saviour—all presented by the Rev. J. Sanford. The tower is heavy, and embattled, and has the appearance of the Milverton style. It has a peal of five bells. It is of very early Perpendicular work. The tower arch is yet incomplete. The staircase to the tower has an unusual appearance, being stopped at the ringers' floor by a sloping roof.

A few years ago a carved stone head was found while the restoration of Nynehead church was in progress. This would lead to the conclusion that the present church was erected from the remains of a former one.

The living is a vicarage, of the annual value of £200, with residence, in the gift of the Lord Chancellor. The Rev. W. H. Walrond, B.A., of Trinity College, Dublin, is the present vicar.



The gift of the impropriate tithes is said to have formerly belonged to the Priory of Taunton.

A new vicarage is now building in a field to the North-East of the church, which commands beautiful views.

Adjoining the church are large free schools, built and maintained by E. A. Sanford, Esq.

The churchyard contains the base of a very handsome cross, with shields, and monuments to the memory of the Jacobs, Ludlow, Bailey, Woodley, Chorley, and Honniball families. In the porch is the old parish bier, now unused, and quite a curiosity.

The charities are small, and divided.

The owner of this parish generously acted some years ago in providing for the wants of the poor during a severe winter by having a deep ravine cut for a road through the rock. It now forms a most picturesque feature. Another year the Nynehead ponds were constructed in a similar manner.

Nynehead is partly situated on the new red sandstone series, and partly on the alluvium. The soil is rich loam, and produces excellent crops. Sand may be dug here.

The Independents have a small chapel in this parish.

E. A. Sanford, Esq., J.P., is lord of the manor.

In this parish is Chipley Park, the ancient residence of the Warres, of Chipley, afterwards of the Clarke family. The old mansion was taken down about 40 years ago. The grounds are yet very beautiful, especially the fine avenue of trees at the entrance. The fish-ponds are yet in existence, and a small portion of the old family seat, which has been fitted up as a residence for the bailiff or steward. It was while the great Locke was on a visit at Chipley that he wrote portions of his celebrated works.

The river Tone runs through this parish, and was by the late W. A. Sanford, Esq., widened into a beautiful sheet

of water, with cascades, &c. This river divides this parish from Wellington.

The chief landowner is E. A. Sanford, Esq.

The principal seat is Nynehead Court, the property of E. A. Sanford, Esq.

Near the new vicarage is a dark pool, called "The Bubbling Pond," which is said to be exceedingly deep, and to contain an unfailing spring.

Nynehead Park is beautifully wooded, and contains some fine specimens of Spanish chesnut and Turkey oak. It is a pretty spot, where—

"The vocal woods and waters lull'd,  
And lost in lonely musing, in the dream,  
Confused, of careless solitude, where mix  
Ten thousand wandering images of things,  
Soothe every gust of passion into peace."

Nynehead Court appears to have been originally erected in the 14th century. At least such is the impression made by what is yet left of the porches and the old hall, a portion of the roof of which is still visible from the first floor.

Near the church are some ancient earthworks, which deserve attention. Some bronze celts have been dug up in the park, and are now at Nynehead Court. Roman coins, hatchets, a bronze key and flint instruments, and the molars of *Elephas Primigenius*, have been found adjoining.

Nynehead is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane and magisterial division of Wellington. Returns one guardian to the Wellington Union. The polling-place is at Taunton. Nearest money-order office at Wellington. Letters arrive from Wellington at 7 a.m.; cannot be posted after 5 p.m., as there is no box or post-office. Nearest railway-station is Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter line. Nynehead is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 1,448 acres. The population in 1831 was 311; in 1861, 321.

## Oak, or Oake.



**A** SMALL parish, situated five and a half miles West of Taunton, four and a half miles North-west of Wellington. It was formerly *Ac*, *Acha*—*Ache*, or *Oke*, and derives its name from the oak tree, probably once very abundant in this neighbourhood. There are four places in this county which take their simple titles from the names of trees—namely, *Ash*, *Elm*, *Halse* and *Oak*. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. *Oake* is thus described:—"Golsfrid holds of Roger, *Ache*. Domno held it in the time of King Edward. . . . There is a mill of four shillings rent, and seventeen acres of pasture and ten acres of wood. In Milvorton a house pays eleven pence. The whole is worth four pounds. When he received it it was worth fifty shillings." It was one of those places belonging to the Manor of Taunton, under the Bishop of Winchester.

*Oak* lies in a flat, well-wooded country, traversed with deep roads, formerly very miry and almost impassable after wet weather.

The *Malets*, of *Enmore*, formerly held the manor. It then passed to the *Trivets* and the *Cokers*. *Oak* was at one time held of the Manor of Compton Dundon.

There are no hamlets attached to this village.

The church is a small, plain edifice, dedicated to Saint Bartholomew, and consists of nave, South aisle and chancel. It is principally built of red and grey sandstone, in the Gothic style. It stands in a field, in apparently an almost deserted spot. The building is rough-cast, and covered with whitewash, altogether reminding us of the neglect of the 18th century, there being hardly a trace of a path from the road to it. With the exception of some pierced Ham stone-work, containing some curious carving (which deserves particular notice), the church is almost destitute of ornaments, and requires restoration as much as any church we know. The pulpit is considerably carved. It is of inferior design, probably of domestic work. The large Perpendicular windows are considered foreign to the church, and have every appearance of having been brought from some other place, so much

are they out of proportion. They seem fixed inside out. The other windows are of several dates and periods. Some of them contain small portions of stained glass figures. The font is large, and apparently very old. This church was newly seated about thirty years ago with high plain deal boxes. Some old carved work was then removed. Most of the seats are now free. It contains monuments of members of the *Palfrey*, *Galhampton*, *Prowde* and *Raymond* families. In the porch may be seen the old bier, now unused. This church is difficult to describe, in consequence of the numerous alterations that have taken place at various times. The tower is on the South side. It is a plain, unassuming building, square and battlemented. It has a peal of three bells. There were formerly four. It is said that one was sent off to be recast, and has never been returned. There is a small organ in the Western gallery. The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £290, with residence and forty acres of land, in the gift of and held by the Rev. J. B. Bishop, M.A., of Jesus College, Oxford. The rectory is about three-quarters of a mile to the East.

Near the church are schools, which were built about 61 years ago and are supported by subscription. There was formerly a small free school, endowed with about thirty shillings per year.

The churchyard, which is overgrown with weeds, contains the foundation and base of a cross, and monuments to the memory of numerous members of a *Bond* family, also *Cottle*, *Cozens*, *Marke*; and there are several more curious old stones, nearly obliterated.

The charities are worth £40 per year. There was another charity of 40s., whereby six poor children were educated at a trifling charge.

*Oak* lies on the new red sandstone formation. The soil is loamy, and produces large crops.

There are quarries of grey sandstone at *Kings*. They are now unused.

Phillip Broadmead, Esq., is lord of the manor.

A revel is held on the Monday after the 1st of September.

The new railway from Taunton to Barnstaple will run through this neighbourhood.

The chief landowners are P. Broadmead, Esq., the executors of the late Mr. John Marke, and Mr. Rowe.

The parish is mostly tenanted by a few farmhouses and labourers' cottages.

Heathfield Lodge, occupied by — Elton, Esq., is in this parish.

Oak is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane; magisterial division of Taunton; in the County Court district of

Wellington, and returns one guardian to the Wellington Union. It is in the highway district of Wellington. The polling-place is at Taunton; nearest money order office at Milverton; nearest railway-station, Taunton or Wellington. Oak is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 864 acres. The population in 1831 was 189; in 1836 it was 147; in 1861 it was 155.

## Orchard Portman



IS a small parish, situated two miles South of Taunton and ten miles North of Chard. It was formerly called Orchard, and derives both its names from families having property in the manor or parish. Its second name, Portman, was added in or about the reign of Edward IV., to distinguish it from Orchard Wyndham. The Portmans have been a family of considerable note for many ages. The family bore the Fleur-de-lis (the same arms as at present) as early as the twelfth century. The Berkeley family took their name from the Castle of Berkeley, in Gloucestershire, previous to the Conquest. Collinson's History of Somerset contains a full account of both families. The Berkeleys trace their descent from the blood royal of Denmark, the dukes of Normandy, from the ancient Saxons, and from the kings of England. The hamlet of Heale is to the South of the church. Orchard Portman is on the turnpike-road from Taunton to Chard.

The church is an ancient edifice, dedicated to St. Michael, and consists of nave, porch, and chancel. It is principally built of stone, in the Perpendicular style of architecture, and is considered to have been built (or considerably altered) in or about the fifteenth century. The font is very plain and heavy; it appears very ancient, and deserves particular notice. The pulpit is placed in the chancel, which is newly seated. The windows are mostly of the Perpendicular date; but some are later. The Eastern is of painted glass, and represents scenes in the

life of our Saviour. The church was restored a few years ago. It contains no monuments. There is a handsomely-carved oak eagle lectern. There is one brass, to the memory of Humphrey Coles, a well-known man in this district in the 17th century. At the Southern entrance of this church is a fine old Norman arch. The tower is embattled. It has a peal of four bells. There was formerly a South aisle to this church, which contained Perpendicular windows. It was removed about twenty years ago. The living is a rectory, in the gift of Lord Portman, and held by the Rev. F. B. Portman, of Christ Church College, Oxford. The Rev. George Cook is the curate in charge. The rectory is adjoining the church, and commands pretty views of the North-East district and of the Stoke hills. The churchyard contains a few headstones and monuments to the memory of those early residents of the parish who are now no more.

The parish of Orchard Portman stands chiefly upon the new red sandstone formation, with portion of lias sub-soil. The soil is good.

Lord Portman is lord of the manor.

Staple Park was formerly a celebrated deer park of the Portmans, and enclosed a large quantity of land encircled with a high fence. The owner claimed and maintained a deer's jump (15 feet) from the boundary hedges of this park.

From the hill above this parish issues a small stream which has the extraordinary power of petrifying stone, wood, or other materials. The peculiar property of the lias from whence it issues is supposed to be the cause.







Orchard Woods have long been a favourite resort with Tauntonians, to whom they have afforded many a quiet and refreshing walk.

*If thou art worn and hard beset  
With sorrows that thou would'st forget ;  
If thou would'st read a lesson that will keep  
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep ;  
Go to the woods and hills ! No tears  
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.*

The only landowner is Lord Portman. The principal residences are Orchard House, occupied by E. C. Coles, Esq., and Orchard Portman Farm, Mr. A. Bond.

This parish is noted for many years as being the inspection-ground of the various reviews of the West Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry in the large meadow of forty acres, known as Orchard Great Field. At the Eastern corner, and near the church, formerly stood old Orchard Portman House, for ages a residence of the Portman family, but lately of the tenants of the Orchard Farm.

Some twenty-five years ago a fever occurred here and carried off several of the occupants, when orders were given to demolish it.

In the Pigott collection of drawings of Somersetshire buildings (taken from 1830 to 1840) may be seen a view of the old house. It faced the South, and had two doorways, was three stories in height, and had eight large and six smaller stone-mullioned windows. The buildings reached down to the church. The drawings referred to are in the Museum of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society.

Orchard Portman is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane and in the magisterial division and County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district, the polling-place and the nearest money-order office are at Taunton. In the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is six hundred and thirty-four acres. The population in 1821 was 100 ; in 1831 it was 112.

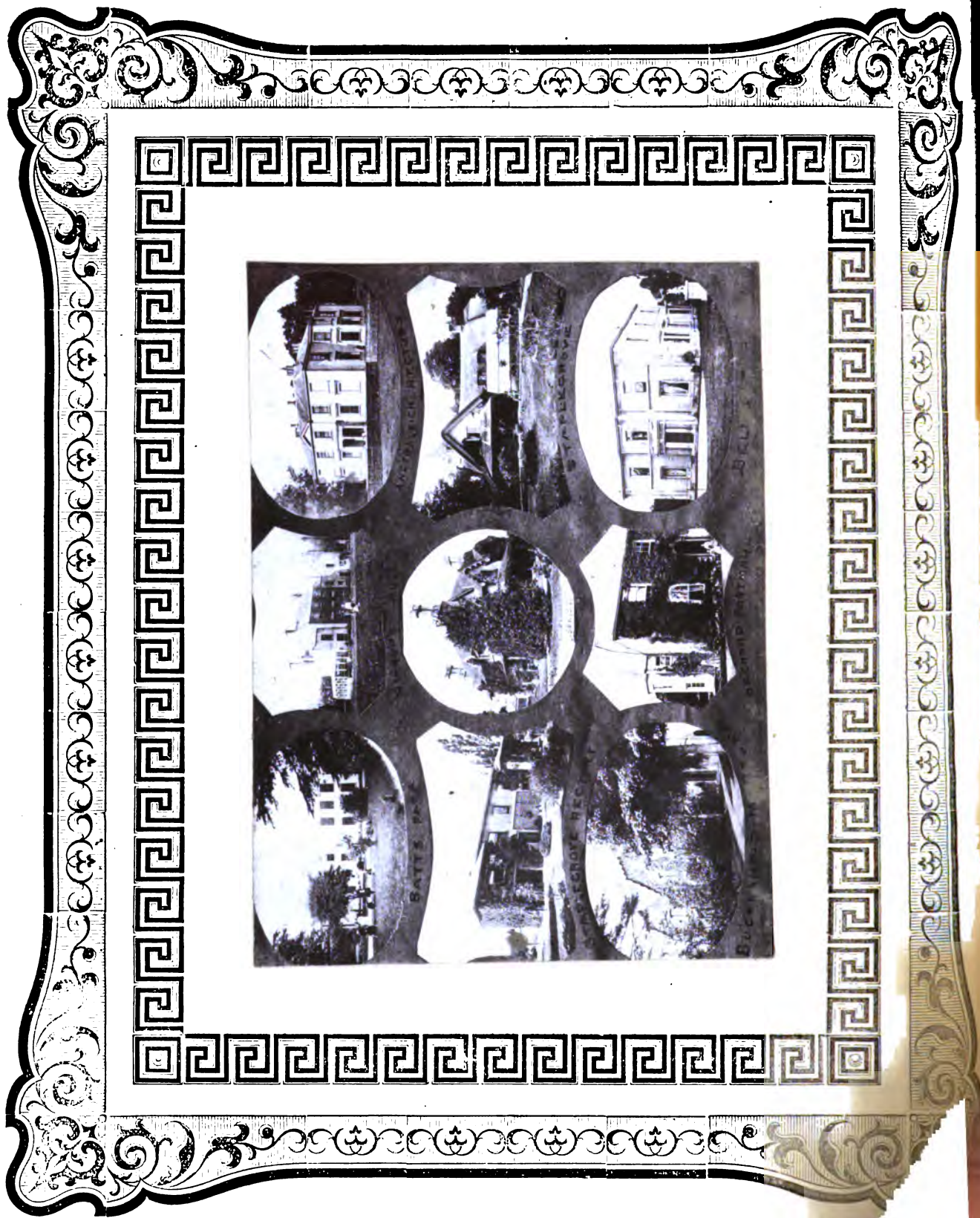
## Pitminster.

**P**ITMINSTER is a very large parish and pretty village, situated four and a half miles South-West of Taunton. It was formerly called Pipemminster, or Pippesmenster, the derivation of which is unknown. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described :—"The same Bishop holds Pipemminster ; Stigand held it, &c., &c. It was worth £13, now £16." Previous to the Conquest this manor was given by King Hardicanute to the Church of Winchester, in whose hands it appears to have remained ever since, except a short period during which it was sequestered, when it was in the possession of the Hill family. The following hamlets are in this parish :—Blagdon, Blackdown or Bledone (valued at £15 in the Domesday record, proportionately a very large sum), where the Priors of Taunton formerly had a seat, which still bears the name of Priors' Park, and is noted for its fine oaks. Henry VIII. gave the manor to the Colles family. Feltham and Howleigh, each about one and a half miles

from the church ; also Duddlestone, Fulford, Leige Poundisford, and Trendle. At the two latter places were formerly chapels. Poundisford was one of the five divisions of the Hundred of Taunton Deane. Several families of distinction have had their residence in this parish, as the Hawkers, Welmans, and the Mallacks.

The church, when restored, will make a noble, lofty edifice. It is dedicated to Saints Andrew and Mary, and is not a very old building, as it was erected on the ruins of a former church—some say Saxon. It consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch and chancel. There are transepts attached on either side. The church is principally built of stone and is now undergoing restoration. Considerable alterations and improvements are being effected. The aisles are called the Poundisford aisles, one of which was the burial-place of the Hill family. The chancel belongs to the Barton Grange property. The font is large and handsome, with carved panels. This church is richly adorned with fine old monuments, which deserve particular notice. The pulpit has the following





## THE VALLEY OF THE TAUNTON RIVER

Orchard Woods have long been a favourite resort of Tauntonians, to whom they have afforded many a quiet and refreshing walk.

If thou art worn and hard beset  
With sorrows that thou would'st forget  
If thou would'st read a lesson that will set  
Thy heart from tanning and thy eyes from wet  
Go to the woods and hills—No tears  
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.

The only landowner is Lord Portman. The residences are Orchard House, occupied by Lord Portman, Esq., and Orchard Portman Farm, Mr. A. J. Portman.

This parish is noted for many years as a fine inspection-ground of the various regiments of the Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry in the late 18th century. The acres, known as Orchard Portman Farm, at the corner, and near the church, formerly the seat of the Portman House, for ages a residence of the Portman family, but lately of the tenants of the Portman Estate.



**P**IPMINSTER is a pretty village situated 2 miles South-West of Taunton, formerly called Pipeminstor, the derivation of which is unknown. At the time of the Conquest it was held by William I. it was then called Pipeminstor; Edward the First holds Pipeminstor; Edward the Second holds Pipeminstor; worth £13, now £16. Pipeminstor manor was given by King Edward the First to Winchester, in whose hands it remained ever since, except a short period when it was sequestered, when it was given to the family. The following is a list of the Bishops of Winchester, Blackdown, &c. &c. Domesday record, prepared by the Priors of Taunton, bears the name of Pipeminstor. Heath and Feltham are also mentioned.

inscription around it:—"Blessed are they that hear the word and keep it." The windows were unusually large, even for the Perpendicular period. There is a fine old monument at the West end of the North aisle. This church underwent considerable alteration about forty-five years ago. Some of the seats are free. The roofs of the South aisle and transept are of moulded oak. A few handsomely-carved bench-ends have escaped the "restoration" of the 18th century. At the East end of the chancel is a large and handsome tomb of the Colles or Coles family, of Barton—a man in complete armour, with his lady by his side. On the front are three boys and three girls. On the South side of the chancel is another tomb, somewhat similar to the above. Each has some quaint lines of poetry. The church contains monuments of the Vibart, Elliot, Grant, Hawker, Coles, Welman, Hawkins, Southwell, Hazeland, and Williams families. There is a neat organ in the tower. There are no brasses, but a little old stained glass in tracery, with many escutcheons. There has been an attempt to warm the church with a heating-apparatus. The tower is low and square, surmounted by a fine octagon spire covered with lead—a conspicuous object in the landscape. It has lately undergone repair by Jeboult, of Taunton. It has a clock and a peal of five bells. The parish register dates from A.D. 1541. The living is a vicarage, of the annual value of £550, and is held by the Rev. G. R. Lawson, of Trinity College, Cambridge. A new house was built for a vicarage about thirty years ago, when, after erection, it was discovered to be out of the glebe, and the present one was then built. The rectorial tithes are worth about £300 per year, and are owned by F. W. Newton, Esq., of Barton. Ecton says that the Prior of Taunton formerly held the gift of the impropriate tithes. Adjoining the church are National schools for both sexes. There is also a Sunday school. The churchyard of Pitminster is a pretty retired spot.

Beneath those rugged elms, that old tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,  
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

There are monuments to the memory of the Locke, Ritt, Helyar, Osborn, Amery, Barrett, Burnell, Buncombe, Southwood, Lawson, Bathie, Gould, Vibart, Billett, and Kinglake families.

There are a few charities.

The Independents have a chapel at Fulwood; also a day and Sunday school. A chapel or school building was erected at Blagdon in 1837. A chapel is now being erected near Blagdon, and will be a neat building.

At the time of the civil wars a portion of Goring's army passed through this parish, and took up their quarters in the fields. They threw down the trees in the roads to prevent pursuit.

The parish of Pitminster, being extensive, stands upon several series of subsoil. The lias and the new red sandstone are the chief. The soil is mixed with stone. All kinds of agricultural produce are raised in large quantities. Sand is dug in the higher part of the parish. The flints from Blagdon Hill are used to repair large portions of the roads of this vale. There is a tanyard at Blagdon, and there are two malting establishments.

Poundisford Park is a beautiful estate, with a fine avenue of large elms. It is surrounded with a large double hedge, with the church path on a portion of it. On the East was the picturesque old road near Barton, known as Watery-lane.

Pitminster, with the adjoining parishes, boasts of a capital agricultural association, which holds its annual meetings at "The Crown," Staplehay, where lectures are occasionally delivered. A volume of these lectures was published a few years ago, and contains a large amount of most useful information on subjects connected with the farming interest.

The streams around this parish are deep and winding, showing the soil to be soft and the currents rapid.

At Amberd is a female lunatic asylum.

The scenery in this parish is very beautiful, and may challenge competition. The hills are Hatcombe and Blagdon, which are composed mostly of the green sand formation. They contain an abundance of water, and supply the Taunton Water Company. Just above this parish are the sources of three Devonshire rivers, namely, the Otter, the Yarty, and the Culm.

The chief landowners are Messrs. Newton, Mattock, Kinglake, Gould, Lethbridge, Reynolds, Cozens, Hutchings, Billett, Helyar, Thompson, Goodland, Pearce, and Marks. The principal seats are Barton Grange, the property of, and occupied by, F. W. Newton, Esq., J.P.; East Brooke House, the residence of A. G. Lethbridge, Esq.; Maryville, Thomas Dawson, Esq.; Canonsgrove, V. J. Reynolds, Esq., J.P.; Lowton House, the property and the residence of R. Mattock, Esq.; Poundisford Park, Mrs. Thompson; Culmhead House, H. C. Jeffries, Esq.; Poundisford Lodge, Mrs. and Miss Helyar; Amberd House, Dr. Woodforde; Quarries, — Maldon, Esq.; Furze-grove, &c., &c.

On the Blackdown Hills are several barrows, some of considerable extent, which if opened would probably prove of interest.



Pitminster is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane, and in the magisterial division and County County district of Taunton. Returns two guardians to the Taunton Union. The highway district, the polling-place, and the nearest money-order office are at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 9.50 a.m.; may be posted at Blagdon until 3.55 p.m. The nearest railway-station is Taunton, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway. In the deanery and

archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. The annual amount of poor relief previous to the Poor-Law Act was £1,129; in 1839 it was £900. The rateable value in 1867 was £10,749; the county rate £10,416. Its area is 6,190 acres. The parish is said to measure seven miles in length. The population in 1791 was 1,036; in 1821, 1,416; in 1836, 1,426; in 1861, 1,572.

## Raddington.



**R**ADDINGTON, or Redington, is a parish and village situated 15 miles North-West of Taunton, 10 miles West of Wellington station, and five miles from Wiveliscombe. It was formerly called Reddington, or Radingetune. At the time of the Norman Survey William I. gave this manor to his friend and favourite, Roger Arundel. Domesday-Book thus speaks of it:—"Robert holds of Roger Radingetune. Two thanes held it in the time of King Edward. There is a mill at the mill hall and three acres of meadow and six acres of wood, &c. It was and is worth thirty shillings." Raddington lies in the South-West angle of the County of Somerset. The situation is beautiful, the surface of the country being spread into lofty swelling hills, with deep vales between them.

Full swell the woods; their every music wakes,  
Mix'd in wild concert with the warbling brooks  
Increased, the distant bleatings of the hills,  
And hollow lows responsive from the vales,  
Whence, blending all, the sweeten'd zephyr springs.

The lands are mostly pasture. In the banks, hills and woods are great varieties of polypodies and fine mosses. Sixty years ago there were no wheel carriages in use, but all hauling was done with panniers. For some time after the Conquest it had owners of the name of Raddington, and it appears that they had a capital mansion here. It afterwards passed to the Hill family.

The church is an old edifice, dedicated to St. Michael, and consists of nave, North and South aisles and transept.

There is a porch. The church is principally built of stone, in the Early English style. It stands well upon an eminence, with a deep and narrow valley to the South. This church was restored in 1845 and 1852.

The tower is a plain edifice, with battlements, and small square windows. It has a clock and a peal of four bells.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £180 for glebe and tithes, with residence and 62½ acres of land; in the gift of J. Hayne, Esq. The Rev. John Hayne, B.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, is the present rector. He is also rector of Stawley, where he resides.

There are Sunday schools.

The soil is white shillet, subsoil rock.

The Bristol and Exeter Railway runs through the parish.

The chief landowners are Messrs. Sandford, Davis, Yeandle, Langford, and Colonel Davis.

Raddington is in the Hundred of Williton and Free-manors, in the magisterial division of Milverton, county court district of Wellington. Returns one guardian to the Wellington Union. It is in the highway district of Wellington. The polling-place is at Wiveliscombe. Nearest money-order office is at Wiveliscombe. Nearest railway station Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter line. Raddington is in the deanery of Dunster, in the archdeaconry of Taunton; diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 1,505 acres. The population in 1831 was 101; in 1857 it was 120; and in 1861 it was 121.

## Runnington



**R**S a very small parish, situated  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles West of Taunton,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles North-West of Wellington. It is seated on the river Tone, and was formerly called Rowington, or Runton, and probably derives its name from Running Tone, the river Tone here being rapid. It was formerly much more so. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"Dodemane holds of William Runetone. Two thanes held it at the time of King Edward. There is a mill of five shillings rent. It was formerly worth twenty shillings, now thirty shillings." The manor passed into the families of Sydenham, Arundel, Speke, Were, &c.

The church is a very small, old edifice, dedicated to St. Peter, and consists of nave, porch and chancel. It is principally built of native red sand-stone, in the Perpendicular style of Gothic architecture. It is considered to have been extensively altered in or about the 16th century, and is altogether a curious little building. It has a handsome old font. The chancel arch was new about 30 years ago. Unfortunately the alterations took place before the revival of Gothic architecture. The pulpit is of very poor design. The most curious thing in this church is the bracket for the hour-glass, which was formerly used to prevent the preacher tiring his congregation by too long a sermon. The remains of the rood-loft, steps and door may yet be seen. The seats are free and appropriated. The East window was put in and the chancel re-fitted about the year 1840, by the present rector. The church contains no monuments or stained glass.

The tower is small, low, square and battlemented, and has only two bells.

The parish register dates from 1586.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £150,

from 16 acres of glebe and tithes, with residence, in the gift of and held by the Rev. E. A. Webber, B.A., of St. John's College, Cambridge. The presentation formerly belonged to the Priory of Taunton.

The rectory is adjoining the church, where the Sunday school is held.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of the Bindon and Shattock families.

The charities are worth £8 a-year, payable to the clerk.

The soil is loam sand, the subsoil red rock. Good crops are raised.

There are quarries of red building-stone. There was formerly a kiln for burning the stone into lime, but it is now discontinued.

Runnington is a well-wooded parish, with a diversity of hills and vales, which are well watered. The scenery around is very delightful, and the views are beautiful, especially towards the South and over Wellington.

The river Tone divides this parish from that of Wellington.

The poor were formerly, and are still, much employed in the woollen mills in this neighbourhood.

The chief landowners are Sir F. Bathurst, E. A. Sanford, Esq., Miss Bindon, Messrs. Fox, and the Rector.

Runnington is in the Hundred of Milverton; in the magisterial division and county court district of Wellington. Returns one guardian to the Wellington Union. The polling-place was at Wiveliscombe. Nearest money-order office at Wellington. Letters may be posted at the letter-box, near the rectory, till 5.30. Nearest railway station, Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter line. It is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 317 acres. The population in 1821 was 90; in 1861 it was 100.

## Ruishton.



**R**UISHTON is a productive parish and small village, situated two miles East of Taunton, on the North Curry road. It was formerly called Riston or Ryssheton, and probably derives its name from its low situation. It was sometimes called the Rush-town, or Rush-Tone, possibly from the rushy or sedgy banks. It was part of the manor of Taunton Deane, and therefore no particular notice is taken of it in Domesday-Book. In former ages the sea washed nearly up to it, and probably the Tone here mixed with the salt water.

Henlade is a pretty hamlet one mile to the South-East.

The church at Ruishton is an ancient, venerable and lofty edifice, dedicated to St. George. It was formerly dependent on the church of St. Mary's, Taunton. It consists of nave, south aisle, porch and chancel. It is principally built of native stone, in the Decorated and Perpendicular periods of Gothic architecture. The South aisle was formerly considered the property of the Anderdon family. At the southern entrance of the church are the remains of some ancient stone-work, having the appearance of being Norman. The font is very old, and lined with lead. It is supported by five Gothic pillars, and deserves particular notice. In the South wall is an old closet, locally called "the Armoury," said to have contained arms and armour, &c., in old times. In the North wall is yet to be seen the ancient staircase to the rood-loft, which formerly divided the chancel from the nave. The windows are good, and mostly of the Perpendicular date. The one at the East end of the south aisle is curious, and has a good hood mould with pillar and circular tracery, very unusual. Probably it was of the Early-English period. This church was restored A.D. 1866 by subscription. Most of the seats are free, but some are appropriated. There is a handsome hagioscope, which was used in Roman Catholic days to enable the congregation to see the elevation of the Host. The greatest curiosity in this church is undoubtedly what appears to be the remains of the Confessional. There is a good sedilia. There is an old painting over the altar representing "The Presentation of the Magi." The picture is said to have been presented to the church by the Anderdon family.

The East window is handsomely glazed in painted glass; subject, "The Crucifixion." The church contains monuments of the Gordon, Strong, Winalow, Anderdon, Arundel, Board and Ball families. The seats are new, of stained deal, lately brought from her Majesty's Savoy chapel. This church formerly contained what is vulgarly called "an excommunication-door." It was the custom for the culprit to enter by the South door, undergo certain pains and penalties, and be turned out of the North door opposite. Over the southern entrance are some finely-carved royal arms, painted and illuminated.

The tower is handsome, and well decorated around with pinnacles; but the top appears unfinished, and many consider that the original intention was to place a spire on it. It is built of blue lias stone. It has a clock and a peal of three bells. The gargoyles on the South aisle and tower are richly carved. The old sun-dial yet remains. The church contains two hundred and four sittings, chiefly free, but some few are appropriate. In the South-West corner of the South aisle is a small carved stone figure of a bishop, in a niche.

The living was a perpetual curacy (lately made a vicarage), of the annual value of £74, in the gift of the trustees of the late Rev. — Peake, and is served by the Rev. J. W. Ward, of St. John's College, Cambridge. It is endowed with £400 royal bounty, and £250 private benefaction. It was formerly a chapel of ease of St. Mary's, Taunton; and the gift of the impropriated tithes formerly belonged to the Priory of Taunton.

Adjoining the church are capital schools, erected in 1861 by subscription and a Government grant, at a cost of \$600. A class-room has been added since, also by subscription.

The churchyard contains the remains of a fine old cross, which had been thrown down, turned over and buried. It was discovered a few years since, and re-set by the late incumbent. It has the patron saint and what appears to be the four Evangelists around it. There are also monuments to the memory of members of the following families—Procter, Anderdon, Board, Chard, Pope, Peake, Marshall, Parsons, Ball, Strangeways, Greedy and Furber.

In 1742 Elizabeth Strong left £100, the interest to be spent in educating poor children.

There is some land, called Great Church and Little Church Meadows, the rent of which is to keep the church in repair. The whole produce about £26 per year. It is situated near Hankridge.

In this parish is that noted old hotel called "Ye Blackbrook Inn," where the mayor and corporation annually "meet for the discussion of divers weighty and urgent matters." This antiquated body dates its charter from the reign of King John, and is supposed to represent the remains of the Taunton Corporation.

Ruishton is situated on the alluvium, but the Henlade neighbourhood joins the lias.

The soil is rich, and produces wheat, barley, and all agricultural roots, &c. Withies are grown here, and a good trade is done in basket-making.

There was some common land at Cowlease, but it is now enclosed.

There are quarries of soft grey sandstone at Howards, near Woodlands, but not worked. Excellent gravel is also dug at Ruishton.

The river Tone washes the northern side of the village, and divides it from Creech and Monkton. The Bristol and Exeter railway passes through the parish.

It was near this village that a fearful railway accident

happened to an express train about fifteen years ago, when it ran off the line, and caused considerable damage to life and property, &c. The engine-driver was buried in the churchyard of St. Mary's, Taunton.

The northern part of the parish is flat, but on the southern side, towards Stoke and Henlade, are some steep hills.

The chief landowners are—Anderdon, Esq., Hon. C. Napier, E. C. Batten, Esq., Rev. A. Grey, Mrs. Scott Gould, Messrs. Bennett and Herniman.

The principal seats are Henlade House, occupied by — Anderdon, Esq.; Woodlands, the residence of Major the Honourable C. Napier; and Henlade Villa, Miss Matthias.

Ruishton is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane. In the magisterial division and County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district, the polling-place, and the nearest money-order office are also at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 4.15 a.m.; may be posted at Ruishton until 8.45. There is a letter-box near the church. Ruishton is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton; diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £2,920. The county rate was £2,855. Its area is 1,004 acres. In 1840 it is said to have contained 1,360 acres. The population in 1821 was 329; in 1831 it was 400; and in 1861 it was 506.

## St. Michael-Church.



Said to be the smallest parish in England, consisting of but forty-two acres, situated seven miles North-East of Taunton, and five South of Bridgwater. It was formerly called Michaelscroce, and derived its name from the dedication of the church to Saint Michael the Archangel. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was possessed by one Ansgar, a menial attendant on the King's household. It is thus described in Domesday Book:—"The same Ansgar holds Michaelscroce. Alivi held it in the time of King Edward, and gelded for half a hide. The arable is one carucate. It was formerly, and is now, worth five shillings." In process of time it became incor-

porated with the other possessions of the Erleighs, lords of Petherton and Durston; from them it descended to the St. Maurs, Bampfyldee, Stawels, Seymours, and Slades. This parish is entirely surrounded by that of North Petherton.

The church is a very small edifice, dedicated to Saint Michael, and consists of nave, small elevated chancel, and two aisles. The North aisle is appropriated by faculty to the lords of the manor of Maunsel. The South aisle has lately been built by Sir Alfred and Lady Slade, of Maunsel, and is appropriated to the organ and choir. The church is built of King's-cliff rubble, with Ham-stone dressings, and is of the fourteenth century work. After the Reformation the church was in ruins for many years,

and was restored in questionable style by John Slade, Esq., of Maunsel. The late Sir Frederick Slade re-seated the whole church with open pine benches, and put in an East window, with a figure of Saint Michael in the centre compartment. The altar deserves special notice, being of good design, in English oak, with a Ham-stone top. The windows are worthy of notice. The East and West windows are good specimens of fourteenth century work, in Ham Hill stone. The four windows of the South aisle are filled with beautiful stained glass, containing respectively figures of the Blessed Virgin, and SS. Cuthbert, Basil and Margaret. The font is of Ham Hill stone, and is about one hundred years old. A sketch of this church is in the Pigot collection of views of Somersetshire churches, at the Museum, Taunton, in which view steps are shown on the exterior. There were formerly two crosses on the roof, and some queer old buttresses against the walls. The church contains several monuments of the Slades, of Maunsel. Some of the Bacon family, of Maunsel, were also interred here.

In the churchyard there is a beautiful monument over the grave of Sir F. Slade, Bart. It is a coped tomb of grey Penant stone, with a white marble cross lying in relief on the top. Around the base is a plate of brass, with the following inscription, in coloured enamel:—"Here lyeth the body of Sir F. W. Slade, of Maunsel, Baronet, deceased 8th August, 1863. To whose soul may the Lord give peace! Amen. Jesu, mercy!"

The tower is on the North side of the church, and is a small, low and square building, with an odd style of roof. There is but one bell, with the following inscription:—"Fear God, honour the king; 1670."

The living is a rectory, of the annual value of eighty pounds, in the gift of Sir P. P. Acland, Baronet, and held by the Rev. G. H. Frodsham E. Hodson, B.A. It was endowed with £800 royal bounty, and was formerly in the patronage of the Abbot and Abbey of Athelney. At the dissolution of monasteries the rectory and advowson were granted to William, Earl of Essex.

The school is joined with that of the adjoining chapelry of North Newton.


The charity is an annual sum to be expended in labourers' tools, endowed by the Slade family.

The subsoil is a bed of the new red sandstone and alluvium.

The manor-house is Maunsel House, the seat of Sir Alfred Slade, Baronet, who is the owner of the whole parish.

Saint Michael-Church is in the hundred of North Petherton. In the magisterial division and County Court district of Bridgwater. Returns one guardian to the Bridgwater Union. The polling-place and the nearest money-order office are at Bridgwater. It is in the deanery of Bridgwater, in the archdeaconry of Taunton, diocese Bath and Wells. It was assessed in 1866 to the county rate at £150. The population in 1821 was thirty-two; in 1866 it was twenty-nine; in 1868, twenty-two.

## Stoke St. Gregory.

 **TOKE ST. GREGORY** is a large and populous rural parish and village, situated eight miles North-East of Taunton, eight miles South of Bridgwater, and five North-West of Langport. It was formerly called Stocha, and was also named after the patron saint of its church, to distinguish it from several other Stokes in the county. In the Norman Survey by William I. there is no account given of the various hamlets in this manor. They probably belonged to other manors. Stoke St. Gregory is situated in the "flat country," sur-

rounded by the moors, on which the inhabitants have a right of common.

The Yeovil branch of the Bristol and Exeter Railway passes through the parish, which contains the following hamlets:—Mare Green, Woodhill Green, Currylode (otherwise Curlwood) Green, Moorlands, Warmoor and Stoeth. On the river Parret, near Stanmore-bridge, in this parish, the rivers Tone and Parret join their waters.

The church is an ancient edifice, built in the form of a cross, and, as mentioned, is dedicated to St. Gregory. It consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch and

chancel, also a transept attached on each side. The church is principally built of blue lias stone, in the Late Perpendicular period. The font is massive. The angle arches under the tower are peculiar, and deserve notice. The pulpit contains some strange carvings, of apparently Elizabethan date. The windows are large and handsome. The old oak bench-ends are rich, and have a good effect. In the East wall of the South chancel are two quaint little ancient windows, apparently much older than the present edifice. This church was restored in 1849. It is a fine, lofty building, ornamented with pierced quatrafoil parapets, and is somewhat similar to that of North Curry. Two hundred and fifty-five of the seats are free; 169 are private. There are in all 424 sittings. The East window of the chancel contains painted glass—subject, Christ and His Apostles. The altar-table is richly carved in a curious manner, foreign to the general style. The church contains monuments to the Court, Lockyer, Blufford, Dare and Greenwood families. The reading-deck is handsome, with the well-known drapery panels and carved cherubs, bearing shields, dated 1628 and 1595. The clerestory over the nave is lofty, and is lighted by eight good Perpendicular windows.

The tower is an octagon, with small spire and a square stair-turret on the North side. It has a peal of five bells.

The parish register dates from 1561.

The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £120, in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Wells, and held by the Rev. Richard W. Moor.

The parsonage is a large house, near the church.

Adjoining are extensive National schools, with a spire and bell-turret, lately erected at a considerable cost. There are also Sunday schools.

The churchyard contains the old yew and ancient stocks; also monuments to the memory of some members of the following families:—House, Barrington, Morgan, Palmer, Franklin, Burrington, Hurman, Weaver, Hembrow, Calder, Coate, Lockyer, Brewer, Hunt.

The fields are in many places below the rivers.

For the purpose of draining the moors a powerful steam-engine was erected in 1865, which discharges the water into the Tone.

An annual harvest-home festival is held at Stoke St. Gregory.

The Bible Christians have a neat chapel in this village.

The parish of Stoke St. Gregory, being large, covers both alluvium and the new red sand-stone series.

The soil is rich, and produces good crops. Large quantities of hay are grown upon the adjoining moors.

There are no quarries.

It is said that a large quantity of turf was formerly dug here.

The Dean and Chapter of Wells are lords of the manor.

There is no court, revel or fair; but a club-walking is held annually.

The river Parret runs on the North-East side of this parish, and the river Tone on the North-West, which is here crossed by three bridges, one of them being that of Athelney, renowned as King Alfred's retreat. Both rivers are subject to the "boar," which is a sudden rushing rise of the water, sometimes very dangerous to boats or vessels. It is a peculiarity to which rivers of the Bristol Channel are subject.

White clay smoking-pipes are manufactured at Winchester, in this parish.

Quantities of withies are grown in the low swampy parts around, and many persons are employed in their cultivation and manufacture.

There are few trees, as the moors are divided by dykes or ditches—

"Where simply Nature reigns; and every view,  
Diffusive, spreads the pure salubrious downs  
In boundless prospect—yonder shag'd with wood;  
Here rich with harvest, and there white with flocks."

The chief landowners are Gore-Langton, Esq., the Dean and Chapter of Wells, Mrs. Scott Gould, &c.

Stoke St. Gregory is in the Hundred of North Curry. In the magisterial division of Taunton. In the County Court district of Langport. It returns two guardians to the Taunton Union. The highway district is at Langport. Nearest money-order office is at North Curry. Letters arrive from Taunton at 9.30 a.m.; may be posted at Stoke until 4.30. Nearest railway station, Athelney, on the Yeovil branch, one and a quarter miles distant. Stoke St. Gregory is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton; diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £9,186; the county rate was £9,190. Its area is 3,790 acres, considered to have been in 1840 3,809 acres. The population in 1821 was 1,369; in 1831 it was 1,507; in 1861 it was 1,617.



## Staplegrove.



**A** PRETTY parish and village, situated about one mile North-West of Taunton, on the Bishop's Lydeard road. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it is not described, as it was a parcel of the Manor of Taunton. It is at present one of the Hundreds of Taunton Deane. Staplegrove is divided into two tithings—Staplegrove and Whitmore.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Filly-street, one mile to the North-East; Whitmore, half-mile to the East; and Staplegrove-terrace, on the Taunton road.

The church is an interesting little edifice, the dedication of which is unknown. It consists of nave, North and South aisles, and chancel, and is principally built of grey sandstone, in the Early English style of architecture. It is considered to have been much altered in the fifteenth century, but the two aisles were probably added at a later period. It has been beautifully restored, with great taste. Numerous texts of Scripture or ornamental device adorn the walls. The font is new, and of elegant design. It is supported by polished marble pillars. It was presented in 1857 by Mr. H. Davis, of Taunton, who is a native of this parish. The arches of the chancel and South aisle appear very ancient, and deserve particular notice. The pulpit is of new oak, on a stone base. The seats are of stained deal, and have a very good and comfortable appearance. The windows are pretty, and are tastefully glazed. One on the East of the chancel contains a painting of the Ascension. There is also a good window at the Western end of the nave. Previous to the late restoration some of the windows on the South side were square-headed, of a debased period. The church was restored in 1857, at a cost of £1,200, principally through the exertions of the present rector. A curious custom was formerly, and is yet to a limited extent, adopted here: the males sit on one side and the females on the other side of the church. This plan is observed in many Continental churches. The visitor may see the ancient hagioscope, in the Western part of the chancel arch, made to enable the congregation to see the elevation of the Host in Roman Catholic times. The chancel is beautifully filled with carved oak stalls and handsome credence-table. There is a good lectern and an old piscina. The church contains monuments of the Minifee, Wood, Searle, Southey, Turner, Norman, Law, and Rawlins families. There are no brasses. Most of the windows have stained glass. There

is a handsome little organ in the North-East corner. What became of the old one, "deponent sayeth not."

The tower is a small, square, battlemented building, with an ancient heavy doorway on the South side. It has a peal of five bells.

The parish register dates from 1558.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £205 tithe rent-charge, with residence and ten acres of land in the gift of Richard Fort, Esq. The Rev. J. P. Scott, M.A., of Oxford, is the present rector. It was formerly a chapel, and was separated from Taunton and made a distinct living in 1554.

The priors of Taunton had in this place a small grange, with a cell or oratory. This oratory was in existence a few years ago, at the South-West corner of the churchyard.

The rectory stands near the church, in an extensive and beautiful lawn. Adjoining are National and Sunday schools.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of the Welsh, Evans, Cadogan, Poele, Rzeghel, Turner, Taylor, Sheppard, Fuller, Eyre, Gadd, Law, Fowler, Wilson, Chalmers, Stiling, Tucker, Scott, Patton, Gillett, Parish and Amery families.

There is no other place of worship in this parish.

The higher parts of Staplegrove are situated on the new red sandstone; that part of the parish near the river Tone is on the alluvium. The soil is mostly sandy, and excellent crops of all the usual agricultural cereals are produced. Flax was formerly grown here. White popplestone is abundant; also brown grit, and the country abounds with a coarse brown agate.

There is no revel or fair.

Two streams water this parish, and there are two mills, one of which was a silk mill for many years, since which time the flax trade has been carried on; but fires have occurred and destroyed the building. The millpuff business has now been commenced.

The Bristol and Exeter railway and the Tiverton canal skirt Staplegrove.

Manure is manufactured at Grabham's tannery, one mile to the North of the village. This is where the late cattle disease was said to have broken out.

The chief landowners are Mrs. Turner, H. G. Moysey, — Esdaile, C. Turner and C. Welman, Esqrs.

The principal houses are Pinkhurst, occupied by C. J. Turner, Esq.; Grove House, the residence of J. F.

Norman, Esq.; and The Elms, the property of Mrs. Turner; Staplegrove Terrace, occupied by several respectable families, and some new villas adjoining; Fairwater, adjoining Taunton, at which the Independents are at present fitting up a college. When completed, it will be a handsome and imposing edifice, and prove an ornament to the neighbourhood.

Staplegrove is in the Hundred of Taunton and Taunton Deane. In the magisterial division and County Court

district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district and the polling-place are at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 7.30 a.m. May be posted at Staplegrove until 6.30. Staplegrove is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese of Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £5,068; the county rate was £4,986. Its area is 1,069 acres. The population in 1821 was 457; in 1861 it was 469.

## Sampford Arundel



IS a small parish and village, situated nine and a half miles South-West of Taunton, two and three quarter miles South-West of Wellington Station, twenty-two North-East of Exeter. It was formerly called Sanford, and is said to have derived its names from the two families of Sanford and Arundel. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"Ralph holds of Roger Sanford; Ailward held it at the time of King Edward . . . It was and is worth thirty shillings." The manor passed through the Arundel, Sanford, Crispin, Streche, Beauchamp, Speke and Baker families. White Ball and Sampford Moor are hamlets of this parish. Sampford is on the main road from Taunton to Exeter.

The church is a small, neat edifice, dedicated to the Holy Cross, and consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch and chancel. It is principally built of stone, in the Gothic style of architecture. The following is Collinson's complete and explicit description of this church in his History of Somerset, in 1791:—"The church is a small structure of one pace, with a tower and four bells." The sittings of the present church are appropriated, and in good taste. There is a neat organ. The windows are of various dates—Early Perpendicular and debased. The church was lately restored, and is now nicely seated with handsome oak benches. It contains monuments of the Baker, Brown, Billott, and other families.

The tower is a small, square, plain building, battlemented, and has a peal of five bells.

The living is a discharged vicarage, of the annual value of £170, with residence, in the gift of John Tripp, Esq.

The Rev. George Sweet, of Oxford, is the present rector. It was formerly appropriated to the abbess and nuns of Canon Leigh. The vicarage is at Broadleigh.

There are small schools, chiefly supported by the vicar.

The churchyard contains many old monuments of previous residents of this village.

Sampford is placed on the new red sandstone series of rocks.

The soil is rich sandy loam, subsoil marl and sand, and produces chiefly wheat, barley, roots, &c.

Flax was formerly grown here in large quantities.

Thomas Ware, Esq., is lord of the manor, and the chief landowner.

The Bristol and Exeter Railway runs through this parish.

The principal seats are Woolcombe, occupied by J. H. Fox, Esq.; Werecote, the residence of Mrs. Kilson; and Easterlands, the seat of Charles Moore, Esq., and for many years the residence of the Shattock family.

The turnpike-road from Wellington to Exeter passes through White Ball, which was a railway terminus during the time the White Ball tunnel was being prepared, about the year 1842.

Sampford Arundel is in the hundred of Milverton. In the magisterial division and County Court district of Wellington. Returns one guardian to the Wellington Union. The Highway district is Wellington. Nearest money-order office, at Wellington. Nearest railway station, Wellington. There is a siding at White Ball. Sampford is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton; Diocese Bath and Wells. Its area is 1,105 acres (returned, as 1,168 in 1836). The population in 1791 was 293; in 1831 it was 427; in 1861 it was 426.

## Staple Fitzpaine.



**STAPLE FITZPAINE** is a healthy parish and pretty village, situated five miles South-East of Taunton, seven miles North-West of Chard. It was formerly called Staple only, which name is considered by some to be derived from "Stabula," and to indicate the neighbourhood of a Roman cavalry station; but others believe that the village derives its name from "Staple," a market, whither merchants carry their wool, cloth, tin and such like staple commodities, for the disposal of them. Its second name was given it by the Fitzpaine family, to whom it once belonged. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was in the possession of the Earl of Norton, who is said to have held it in demesne. It is thus described in Doomsday-Book:—"The Earl himself holds Staple. Two thanes held it in King Edward's time. There is a small mill, which pays 30 pence, and 24 acres of meadow, pasture one mile in length and one furlong in breadth, a wood one mile long and two furlongs broad. It was worth ten pounds, now twelve pounds." To this manor belongs an orchard in Langport, which pays 50 eels. It passed into the hands of the De Brus, Fitzpaines, the Crown, and the Portmans. Staple appears to have formerly been a place of some importance, judging from its name and traditions.

The following hamlets are in this parish: Bowhall, Whitley and Bulford. In 1791 there were but fifty houses in the parish. The situation is in a rich, woody vale, below the North ridge of the Blackdowns. Extensive and beautiful views are obtained in many of the higher parts.

The church is a large, lofty and handsome edifice, dedicated to St. Peter, and consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch and chancel. It is principally built of blue lias stone, in that style of architecture known as the Perpendicular. The South entrance doorway is of Norman construction, and points out the antiquity of some parts of this church. The font is of handsome design, and has a good carved oak cover. There are some beautifully-carved old oak stall-ends, which deserve particular notice. The monuments in this church are numerous. The pulpit, reading-desk and the chancel and vestry-screens appear to have been constructed from the original carvings of the old church. The windows of the chancel are of painted glass. That over the altar represents the Crucifixion. Some of the other windows deserve attention. This church was restored and the South aisle erected about twenty

years ago. In the Pigott collection of drawings of the Somersetshire buildings there is a nice sketch of Staple church, in which it is shown without any aisles. The chancel benches are handsome. There is a piscina in the usual place. There is a good arcade of pointed arches on each side of the nave, the Eastern arch being about half the width of the others; a handsome canopied niche at the North-East corner of the North aisle; also another smaller one adjoining. Both are in rather unusual positions, and deserve attention. Staple church contains a monument of the Cross family. This was formerly much decorated, after the old style, with cherubs, &c. The tablet alone remains. In the chancel floor were formerly inscriptions on three black stones to the Hare, Farnham and Chettle families. There is also a monument to the Sheppard family. In the North-West corner of the church is a queer little niche, with a figure carved in the exterior angle. There is a similar one at Buishton; but they are not usual.

The tower is a splendid example of Gothic architecture. It is crowned with eight beautiful pinnacles, and has a turret on the North side, also a peal of five bells. An account of one of these bells is given in the Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological Society, volume I.

There is a neat organ under the tower.

The parish register dates from 1684.

The living is a rectory, of the annual value (with Bickenhall) of £584, with residence, and 50½ acres of glebe, in the gift of Lord Portman. The Rev. F. B. Portman, M.A., of All Saints' College, Oxford, is the rector. In the year 1292 the living was valued at eight marks.

The rectory (on the South of the church) is a large, handsome building, erected about 30 years ago by the Rev. F. B. Portman.

Near are private schools for boys and girls, the average attendance being between 40 and 50.

The old vicarage is occupied by the curate.

Staple lies high and pleasant. It is a pretty village, and within the past twenty years has made great advances. The roads around are generally in good order.

The churchyard is a fine open space, and contains the base of a cross, an old yew, and monuments to the memory of the Hare, Wright, Portman, Slade, Crabb, Grabham and Dicks families.

There are almshouses for six persons. These buildings formed the kitchen of the old manor-house, erected by the

Fitzpaines. Many ruins of the other parts of the manor formerly stood in the orchard adjoining. In 1643 this almshouse was endowed by Mrs. Rachael Portman for six poor persons—two from Staple, two from Bickenhall and one from Thurlbear. The poor to have 2d. per week and a black gown once a-year, which they were to wear at church every Sunday, if well, or forfeit 6d. to the clerk. One person was to be appointed reader, with a salary of 2s. 4d. per week. To support this certain sums were to be annually paid from the rents of the manor of Bickenhall and Staple. The weekly pay is now 2s., instead of 2d.

The soil is stiff clay, and produces chiefly wheat, oats and grass.

A brickyard was opened in this parish some years since, but is now discontinued.

There are quarries of blue lias stone, which is burned into good lime. Flints, sand and stiff clay are also dug here.

The Fitzpaines formerly occupied an old manor until the reign of Henry VIII., when it was almost destroyed by fire. Lord Portman is the lord of the manor and principal landowner.

Several springs rise in the adjoining hill, and, meeting, run through the village.

On Blackdown and Staple hills were formerly about 1,000 acres of common land, on which all the landowners had a right of pasturage for cattle, and the poor a right to cut fuel and turf. There were also several hundred acres of waste land adjoining the Forest of Neroche.

Staple Fitzpaine is in the hundred of Abdiok and Bulston. In the magisterial division of Ilminster. County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The Highway district, the polling-place and the nearest money-order office are at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 10.30 a.m., per foot post; may be posted at Staple until 3.15. Nearest Railway Station, Taunton, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway. Carriers to Chard and Taunton pass on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Staple is in the Deanery of Crewkerne, in the Archdeaconry of Taunton; Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £2,055; the county rate was £2,266. Its area is 2,780 acres. The population in 1791 was 280. In 1831 it was said to be 415; in 1861 it was 284.

Staple village, although near Taunton, cannot be said to be really in the "Valley of the Tone;" but as some of the lands in the parish may be, we have included it in our list.

## Stawley



Stawley is a pretty rural parish and small village, on the borders of Devon, in a low valley, well wooded. It is five miles North-West of Wellington railway-station, five miles South-West of Wiveliscombe, and twelve miles from Taunton. In the Western division of the Hundred of Milverton. Wellington Union and County Court district. Taunton Deanery and Archdeaconry. Diocese of Bath and Wells. It is near the Bristol and Exeter Railway, and adjoining the river Tone. Stawley was a large manor at the time of William the Conqueror, and was held between Alured de Isparia and Oswald and Ailward.

The church is an old building, in the Early English style, with nave, aisle, chancel, transept and porch. The tower is small, with but three bells. There is an organ and good font.

The register dates from 1528.

John How by his will, dated March 26, 1529, ordered his body to be within the tower and church of Stawley, and left eighteen pence for ever, for the churchwardens to burn a wax taper during all times of Divine service.

The living is a rectory, worth £150 a-year, with residence and 27 acres of glebe, in the gift of John Hayne, Esq., of Dorchester. It is held by the Rev. John Hayne, B.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, who is also rector of Raddington.

A Sunday-school is held in a room adjoining the churchyard.

The soil is clay and loam; subsoil, slate and limestone.

The area is 830 acres. The population in 1861 was 188.

The hamlet of Apeley is half a mile South-East of the church.

Trace bridge is a lovely and romantic spot.

Letters by foot-post from Wellington, which is the nearest money-order office.

## Stoke St. Mary.



STOKE ST. MARY is a small parish and pretty village, situated three miles South-East of Taunton, and ten miles North of Chard, was formerly called Stocha or Stooke, and derives its second name from its patron Saint. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was not particularly described, as it belonged to the Manor of Taunton. It was at that time, however, specifically exempted from sending men to the army. The reason is supposed to have been from the small number of residents, who were required at home to till the ground. In other respects it was subject to the same customs as Taunton Deane. The Bishops of Winchester had anciently a right of free-warren in this, as in all the parishes of the Manor. The village of Stoke is beautifully and pleasantly situated, backed up on the East by high hills, covered with underwood.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish : Stoke-hill and Broughton,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the South-West.

The church is a pretty little edifice, dedicated to St. Mary, and consists of nave, porch (South aisle recently added), chancel and South transept. It is principally built of blue lias stone, in the Gothic style of architecture, and has undergone many alterations. The font is heavy, and has been lately restored. The seats are all new, and of deal. The pillars are circular, and deserve notice. The pulpit is of stone, also new. Very few of the old windows are left. This church was restored in 1854. All the seats are free. The chancel is paved with encaustic tiles, and fitted with handsome stalls. The church contains a monument of the Doble family. The East window is filled with stained glass.

The tower is a small, square building, with a pretty little stained glass window. It has a peal of four bells.

The church of Stoke was formerly considered a chapel of ease attached to that of St. Mary's, Taunton.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £110, in the gift of Lord Portman, and held by the Rev. F. B. Portman, M.A. The Rev. W. H. Lance is the curate in sole charge. There is no rectory house.

The school is conducted with that of Thurlbear (the adjoining parish).

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of the Marsingall, Brown, Bond, Jacobs, Murless, Brass, Stodgell, Marler, Jennings, Harman, Brown, Daymond, Maine and Farrant families.

The Independents have a commodious chapel, erected in 1825, at the entrance of the village.

Stoke St. Mary lies on the escarpment of the lias series of rocks, the Western parts of the parish being on the new red sandstone. The soil is clayey, and produces chiefly wheat and beans. There are quarries of lias stone, which contain numerous fossils.

At the Somersetshire Archæological Society's Museum may be seen a fossil Plesiosaurus, found by one of the secretaries of the above society at Stoke St. Mary. As some of our younger readers may not know the description of animal to which we refer, we add the following : — "Of these monsters of the ancient seas, nine different genera have already been found entombed in the secondary strata, and of some of the genera there are several species. They have been called *saurians* by geologists, from the resemblance they bear to the lizard tribe, *saura* being the Greek name for a lizard. A common green lizard is a tolerably good miniature representation of the general form of the reptiles we speak of; but a crocodile or alligator gives a still better idea of them. It must be remembered, however, that in speaking of the fossil remains of those animals, we mean only their skeletons or bones: the flesh is never converted into a fossil state. It very seldom happens, also, that the entire skeleton of any large animal is found, particularly in the strata that were deposited at the bottom of a sea, and for this reason: the bones in the living body are kept together by a cartilaginous substance, or gristle, which after death putrefies, and then the several members fall asunder. Very often, too, we find only detached bones; and this may be accounted for by another circumstance attending the process of putrefaction. When that commences in a dead animal, a considerable quantity of gas is generated, which swells up the body, and, if that be in water, makes it so much lighter, that it floats. In process of time the skin bursts, and the gradually loosened bones are scattered far apart. Such detached bones are frequently all by which we are enabled to decide upon the nature of the animal; and the general reader may, perhaps, think that they are sufficiently scanty materials, considering the important conclusions which geologists sometimes draw from them. But the discoveries of philosophers who have occupied themselves in comparing the anatomical structure of the lower animals with that of the human frame, and have created the interesting

and beautiful department of science called Comparative Anatomy, have enabled them to establish certain fixed and invariable principles for our guidance in this curious branch of geological inquiry. The *Plesiosaurus* is so called from its near approach to the lizard tribe, *plesion* being Greek for *near*. It has a considerable resemblance in the body to the *Ichthyosaurus*, but the head is much smaller, and is altogether of a different structure; but its most remarkable character is the great length of its neck.

There are a few flowers and plants peculiar to the neighbourhood.

A revel is held on the Monday after the 8th of September. Races have recently been established.

The hills are steep, and many of the roads narrow and deep.

The chief landowners are Lord Portman, E. J. Eadaile, Esq., and Capt. Patton, R.N.

The principal seats are Stoke Court, occupied by Major W. S. Altham, and Stoke House.

Stoke St. Mary is in the hundred of Taunton Deane. In the magisterial division and County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district and polling-place are at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton, through Shoreditch, at 8 a.m. May be posted at Stoke until 4.15. Nearest railway-station, Taunton. Stoke is in the deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton; diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £1,826. The county-rate is £1,808. Its area is 911 acres. The population in 1821 was 248; in 1831 it was 275; in 1861 also 275.

## Thorn Falcon



IS a small parish, situated  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles East of Taunton, and nine miles North-East of Ilminster. It was formerly called Torne, Thorn Fagon, or Thorn Parva. In Domesday-Book, at the time of the Norman Survey, it is thus described:—"Anager holds of the Earl Torne. Algar held it at the time of King Edward. . . . It was and is worth three pounds."

For many years it was the property of a family who gave it its name, and who held it under the Castle of Dunster. It afterwards passed through the families of the Brooks, Chedders, Chapels and Burridges, by whom it descended to the Batten family. The parish is on the turnpike-road between Taunton and Ilminster.

The church is a small, ancient edifice, dedicated to the Holy Cross, and consists of nave, porch and chancel. It is principally built of rough rag-stone, rough cast, in the Gothic style of architecture. The font is very ancient, and plain. The bench-ends are richly carved, and deserve particular notice. The East window is *in memoriam* of Emily Batts, and is handsomely painted. The church contains monuments of the Murless and Johnson families. There is a stained glass window in the tower, to the Batten family, subject: "The Baptism of Christ." The tower is battlemented, with buttresses, and has a peal of three bells.

The living is rectorial, and the rent-charge £140, with residence and 72 acres of glebe; in the gift of John Batten, Esq. The Rev. O. S. Harrison, of Queen's College, Oxford, is the present rector. The rectory is adjoining the church. There are schools, supported by the Messrs. Batten; also Sunday schools held in the church.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of the Burrows, Adams, Branson, Webber, Bryan, Murless, Batten, Harred, Boobier, Sealy, Stevens and Palmer families.

The parish of Thorn lies upon the alluvium and the new red sand-stone beds.

The soil is red clay and marl; and excellent crops of all the usual farm produce are raised.

There is an agricultural association connected with this parish, also with those of North Curry, Hatch Beauchamp, West Hatch and Curry Mallet.

The old manor-house is near the church, and has lately undergone restoration and alteration. C. Batten, Esq., is Lord of the Manor.

The Chard canal (now about to be destroyed) passes through this parish, also the Chard and Taunton Railway. On the former is an "incline," erected at considerable expense, to convey the canal boats on a railway to higher or lower levels. Thorn Clump is the only hill of importance in this parish.



The chief landowners are John E. Batten, Esq., Edward and Herbert Batten, Esqrs., and the Rector.

On Maddicks-tree Hill there formerly stood a row of miserable hovels, lately known as Paradise. These were removed, and the spot was afterwards called by a wag "Paradise Lost."

Thorn Falcon is in the Hundred of North Curry, in the Magisterial division and County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district and the polling-place, and nearest money-

order office, are at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton at seven a.m. May be posted at Thorn until 8. Nearest railway-stations, Hatch Beauchamp and Taunton, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway, on the Chard line. Carriers pass near Thorn village constantly.

Thorn is in the Deanery and in the Archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £1,517. The county rate was £1,539. Its area is 814 acres. The population in 1821 was 221. In 1831 it was said to be 273. In 1861 it was 209.

## Thorne St. Margaret.



**THORNE ST. MARGARET** is a well-wooded parish and small village, situated ten miles West of Taunton, three miles West of Welington, and five and a half South of Wiveliscombe. It was formerly called Torne, and derives its name from the Thorn family, and its second name from the Patron Saint of the church. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"Ralph (the priest) holds of the Earl Torne. Two thanes held it all the time of King Edward. It was worth forty shillings, now thirty-two shillings."

It is situated on the river Tone, and the Bristol and Exeter Railway passes through the parish.

The church is a newly-erected edifice, dedicated to St. Margaret, and consists of nave, porch, vestry, South aisle and chancel. It is principally built of hard red sandstone, in the Early English style. The font is handsome, with eight polished marble pillars. The old font lies in the churchyard, and is a curious relic. The screen forming the vestry is ancient, and deserves particular notice. The pulpit is of stone, of good design. The altar is handsome and effective; the cloth was presented by W. Morgan, Esq. The windows are in pairs, with pointed heads and arcade recesses. The church was rebuilt and consecrated in 1865. The seats are open; about 60 of those of the South aisle are free. The pillars are of Bath stone, of a massive character. There is a small harmonium in the chancel. The church contains no monuments. There is a curious old brass, with an engraved figure and inscription, near the tower. The chancel is paved with tile, in ornamental pattern.

The tower is an old building, small, low and battlemented. On the South side is a curious little window, with singular tracery. There are a clock and a peal of three bells.

The old church was in the Early English style, with Perpendicular windows on the South side. It was a small building. There were some other queer little windows. The nave of this church was very small, and the chancel very large, which produced an unusual appearance.

The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £113, in the gift of the Archdeacon of Taunton, and held by the Rev. G. L. Cole, M.A., of St. John's College, Cambridge.

In 1765 the living was augmented in various ways to the value of £400, with which an estate was purchased at Huntspill, Somerset. In 1808 it was further augmented with other lands, in West Buckland parish, worth £600.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of the following families:—Webber, Hitchcock, Savery, Ansfield.

Thorne St. Margaret stands upon the new red sandstone series of rocks, and on the border of the Devonian series. The subsoil is limestone and sandstone. The soil is sandy, and produces chiefly wheat, barley and turnips.

There are quarries of red sandstone, and blue slates are also dug here.

J. C. Luxmore, Esq., is lord of the manor.

A revel was formerly held here in August, but is now discontinued.

The Tiverton and Taunton canal ran near, but is not now used.

Flax was formerly grown here in considerable quantities.

The hills are numerous and steep. A walk through a beautiful wood leads the visitor to the remains of the old abbey, known as Cothay, in the parish of Kittisford.

The chief landowners are John C. Luxmore, E. A. Sanford, T. Ware and W. Morgan, Esqrs.

Collinson says, "In the high banks grow various aspleniums, mosses, and rare ferns. The stones are mostly siliceous, of the coarse, yellow and reddish agate, liver-coloured grit and black jasper kinds, with quartz pebbles, beautifully veined with red and rust colour, many of them rounded by water."

Thorne St. Margaret is in the Hundred of Milverton; in the magisterial division and County Court district of Wellington. Returns one guardian to the Wellington Union. It is in the highway district of Wiveliscombe. The polling-place is at Wiveliscombe. Nearest money-order office and the nearest railway-station at Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway. Thorne is in the deanery and in the archdeaconry of Taunton; in the diocese of Bath and Wells. Its area is 824 acres. The population in 1821 was 145; in 1831 it was 165; in 1851, 143; in 1861, 144.

## Thurlbear,



R Thurlbeer, is a small parish situated three and a half miles South-East of Taunton, and ten miles North of Chard. It was formerly called Torlaberie, Thurlbury, or Thurlbare. It is now vulgarly pronounced Durle-burrow. Possibly it derives its name from Drogos-burrow. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it is thus described:—"Drago holds of the Earl (Morton), Torlaberie; Ulviet held it at the time of King Edward. It was and is worth six pounds." This Drago or Dru was of the Montacute family, in whose possession the manor remained many years. It passed to the Bonvilles, afterwards to Lord Howard, and thence to the Portmans. Thurlbeer, or Thurlbear, lies on high ground, agreeably intermixed with woods, small hills and vallies, on a lias formation.

The hamlet of Greenway belongs to this parish.

The turnpike road from Taunton to Chard passes through the neighbourhood.

The church is a very ancient edifice, and was formerly a chapel to Saint Mary Magdalene, Taunton. It is dedicated to Saint Thomas, and consists of nave, small North and South aisles, and chancel. It was originally built of blue lias stone, at a very early date, and is considered to have been nearly rebuilt or considerably altered in or about the fourteenth century. Parts of the nave, the arcades, and the northern wall of the chancel, are of Norman workmanship. The font is plain, and apparently very ancient. The church altogether is very different to

the generality of those in this neighbourhood, and deserves particular notice. The East window is a triplet, with stained glass; subject: "The Crucifixion." Other windows have late heads. This church was beautifully restored about ten years ago. On the North side of the chancel is a curious Norman pillar, half hidden in the wall. The small hagioscope, or squint, on the South side of chancel arch (under another arch), has an unusual appearance, and was for the purpose of enabling the congregation to see the elevation of the Host. The church contains no monuments. The chancel is richly laid with encaustic tiles, and fitted with handsome stalls. There is a beautiful stained-glass window. The tower, which is battlemented, is of the Perpendicular period, and has a peal of four bells. Previous to the late restoration of this church, all the windows of the South side were square-headed, of a debased period. The parish register dates from the beginning of the seventeenth century. The church has lately been newly seated.

The living is a rectory, of the annual value of £136, with residence, and twenty-eight acres of glebe, in the patronage of Lord Portman, and held by the Rev. F. B. Portman, M.A., of Staple. The Rev. W. H. Lance, of King's College, London, is the curate in sole charge. The rectory is a large building adjoining the church, and has beautiful grounds around it.

There is a school, supported by voluntary contributions.

The churchyard contains a handsome cross in good preservation; also monuments to the memory of members of the Channing, Dawe, Cooke, Barrett, Luke and other families.

Thurlbear lies upon the lias series of rocks. The soil is stony, and produces chiefly grain crops. Teazels are also grown occasionally. There are many quarries of blue lias stone on the hills, which are full of shells and fossils.

Lord Portman is lord of the manor.

The celebrated Staple Deer Park, of considerable extent, existed for many years in this neighbourhood.

Some of the streams of water in this parish which spring from the lias formation have the peculiar property of causing a kind of petrification. Upon removing portions from the bottom of the water-course masses of a hard, rough substance are obtained, the under sides of which have every appearance of stalactite, and have very beautiful forms and shapes. The waters hold calcareous matters in solution, and in such excess that they readily deposit some part of it on any substance that lies in their way.

This parish is also noted for the large quantity of lime burnt here, affording the principal supply to the greater part of Taunton Deane. The noise of the burning stones and the particular smell of the fire may be noticed a considerable distance around.

Thurlbear is in the hundred of North Curry; in the magisterial division and County Court district of Taunton; returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district, the new polling-place, and the nearest money-order office, are at Taunton. Nearest railway-station is Taunton. Carriers pass through the parish on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Thurlbear is in the Deanery and in the Archdeaconry of Taunton, and the Diocese of Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £980. The county rate was £1,199. Its area is 954 acres. The population in 1821 was 215; in 1836 it was 202; in 1860 it was 192.

## Tolland.



OLLAND is a small, thinly-populated parish and village, situated ten miles from the Taunton railway-station, and four miles from Wiveliscombe. It was formerly called Taland, and Tolandar. The Manor of Tolland was held of the Bishops of Winchester, by the Gaunt and Lathell families, and was formerly subject to the same customs as the Manor of Taunton Deane.

The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—East Tolland and Garldon, or Garmeden, which was formerly an ancient manor.

Tolland stands in a fertile, well-wooded and watered vale, surrounded by hills which are well cultivated.

On the East of the church is a beautiful hanging wood, which clothes a steep hill and has a pleasing appearance.

The church is an interesting little old edifice, dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, and consists of nave, North aisle, transept, porch and chancel. It is principally built of red sandstone, in various styles of Gothic architecture, and gives the idea of considerable age. At one time it was given to the Prior of Buckland. The font is very ancient, and is lead-lined. The pillars and arches are of two styles of architecture. They are plain and pointed, and deserve notice. The pulpit is well carved. It appears

to be of the Elizabethan age. There are some curious old oak bench-ends. The most attractive object in this church to an antiquarian is the number of original encaustic tiles, although mixed with many modern ones. The church is being restored, under the care of Messrs. Giles and Robinson, architects. Nearly all the seats are free, but some are allotted. The windows are of various styles and dates, generally not good. The church was covered by two waggon-headed roofs, which were ceiled about 80 years since. There are monuments to the Crosse and Hammond families. The tower is low, square, and heavy, built of slate stone. It is said to be about 100 years old, and that the old tower was of wood. It has a peal of three bells. The small turret, with stairs to the ancient rood-screen, may be seen, and portions of the old screen have been placed in the front of the Western gallery.

The parish register dates from A.D. 1538.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £140, with residence and forty acres of glebe, in the gift of the Lord Chancellor. The Rev. James Crosse, of Saint Alban's Hall, Oxford, residing at Lydeard St. Lawrence, is the present rector. It is served by the Rev. Vaughan Day, of Ash Priors. Adjoining the church are schools for boys and girls. A Sunday-school is held at the rectory.



The churchyard contains the remains of a stone cross, and monuments to the memory of members of the following families :—Crosse, Bruford, Webber, Woolcott, Hancock, Cullyford and Bishop.

Tolland stands upon the Devonian series of rocks, which contains small masses of lime-stone. There is also slaty stone in abundance.

The soil is clay, rag and sand, and produces chiefly turnips, barley, peas and flax.

The roads are deep, and were once overhung with trees. Ferns and various wild flowers are very abundant and beautiful.

The manor-house is near the church, and is occupied by the Brufords, an old Tolland family.

A spring, rising in the parish of Brompton Ralph, waters the village and turns a mill.


The hills are numerous and steep; but the scenery is very delightful in the spring.

"The woods were bending with a silent reach;  
Then o'er the vale, with gentle swell,  
The music of the village-bell  
Came sweetly to the echo-giving hills."

The chief landowners are the Rev. — Yescombe and the Trustees of the Pincombe Charity.

Tolland is in the hundred of Bishop's Lydeard. In the Magisterial Division of Bishop's Lydeard and County Court District of Taunton. It returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The nearest money-order office is at Wiveliscombe. Nearest railway station, Bishop's Lydeard or Crowcombe, on the West Somerset Railway. Tolland is in the Deanery of Dunster, in the Archdeaconry of Taunton. In 1867 it was rated at £1,286. The county rate was £1,193. Its area is 800 acres. In 1837 it was considered 737 acres. The population in 1821 was 113. In 1831 it was 121; in 1851 it was 147; in 1861 it was 138.

## Trull

S a large scattered parish and village, situated two miles South-West of Taunton, on the road to Honiton and the Blackdown Hills, and six miles from Wellington. It was formerly called Trendle, and probably derives its name from the Saxon a "bowl," signifying to roll or twirl. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I., in the Domesday Book, there appears no account of it, as it was probably included in the manor of Taunton Deane.

Trull was the birthplace of George Bond, in 1588, who, by great industry and considerable talent, rose to be Lord Mayor of London.

The parish is rather flat, but fruitful and well wooded, especially with fine elms.

Trull, with the neighbouring parishes of Corfe, Pitminster and Angersleigh, has a spirited and flourishing agricultural society, which holds its meetings at Staplehay.

The church is an ancient edifice, dedicated to All Saints', and consists of nave, North and South aisles, and chancel. There is a transept attached on one side. The church is principally built of sandstone, in the Late Perpendicular

style of Gothic architecture, and is considered to have been considerably altered in or about the sixteenth century. The screen is beautifully carved. There is no chancel arch, which is rather a disfigurement. The font is old and plain. The "drapery panels" are very fine in this church, and deserve particular notice. The pulpit is unusually beautiful, and filled with large carved oak figures. The windows are very large, in accordance with the late style of architecture. The bench-ends are fine, and have been lately restored. The church was re-seated in 1863. About fifty seats are free. In the West end is a gallery and organ. There is a memorial window to James Vibart, Esq. There are some good new stalls in the chancel, which are the property of the lay rector, F. W. Newton, Esq., of Barton Grange, who has lately restored it. The church contains monuments of the Lucas, Baker, Stephens, Stone, Smith, Blake, Strickland, Robinson, Mills, Duncan and Buncombe families. There are two old stained glass windows in the chancel—the subject of one, "The Crucifixion;" the other, "Saint Michael, Saint George and the Dragon." Such windows are now rare.

The tower is a square, plain building, with battlements, small pinnacles, and a peal of five bells. It has an outside

stair to the height of the church. The tracery of the West window of the tower is peculiar. It was formerly filled with stained glass.

The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £130 gross, with residence, in the gift of F. W. Newton, Esq. It is held by the Rev. H. C. Seller, B.A.

It was endowed with £500 Parliamentary Grant, £800 Royal Bounty, and £600 private benefaction.

The great and small tithes are worth £530, owned by F. W. Newton, Esq.

The church of Trull was formerly a chapel of ease, attached to Saint Mary Magdalene, Taunton.

In the village are schools for both sexes; also a Sunday school. In 1756 John Wyatt gave the proceeds of £210 in support of a school for poor children. One Buncombe gave 20s.

In the Pigott collection of views of Somersetshire churches, in 1832, a churchyard cross (or rather what remains of it) is shown at Trull. It is not now visible.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of members of the Speedman, Keene, Blake, Chapman, Seller, Stevens, Denning, Duncan, Ivie, Vibart, Hamilton, Passmore, Robinson and Lewis families.

The parish of Trull lies principally upon the new red sandstone series. The soil is clay, subsoil marl, and all kinds of agricultural produce are raised.

There are quarries of sandstone at Higher Gatchell.

Flint is occasionally dug here.

E. W. Cox, Esq., is lord of the manor.

The Wesleyan College, an educational establishment for young gentlemen, is in this parish. It was erected about twenty years ago, on a fine spot of land near Batts' Park. It is in the Tudor style of architecture.

There is a brickyard near the Taunton-road.

There was formerly a pottery at Trull.

Taunton races were for some years held on Trull Moor, in this parish.

The chief landowners are Captain Patton, Thomas Blake, Robert Mattock and William Stevens, Esqrs.

The principal seats are Gatchell House, occupied by the Rev. W. J. Allen, J.P.; Dipford, the residence of Mrs. Blake; Chilliswood, Mrs. Vibart; Comeytrowe, the property of — Patton, Esq.; Batts' Park, Miss Passmore; Cutsey, T. Blake, Esq.

This parish is noted for the longevity of its inhabitants. In 1792 Elizabeth Broadmead died at Trull in her 150th year. In 1867 Sarah Steevens died, aged 103.

Trull is in the Hundred of Taunton Deane. Magisterial division and County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district, the polling-place and nearest money-order office, are at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 8 a.m.; may be posted at Trull until 6 p.m. Nearest railway-station, Taunton, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway. Carriers pass the village. Trull is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton; diocese, Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £5,226. The county rate was £5,135. Its area is 2,224 acres. The population in 1821 was 528; in 1831 it was 506; in 1861 it was 779.

## Thurloxton



**THURLOXTON** possibly derives its name from a corruption of Thorlakeston, a family who resided here in the reign of Edward I. It is a healthy village and small rural parish, about half-way between the towns of Taunton and Bridgwater. It lies in a fruitful and well-wooded neighbourhood, and the lands are rich and productive. It is not mentioned in the Domesday report.

The whole, or a large portion, of the manor was given to the monks at Taunton. They also held the advowson of the church, with divers lands and tenements, of the Castle of Dunster. After the dissolution of monasteries the manor continued some time with the Crown. It afterwards passed to the Babington family, and from thence to the Portmans.

There was a chapel at Thurloxton, which was given to the Canons of Buckland.



The church is a neat little stone edifice, consisting of nave, chancel, and porch. It is dedicated to St. Giles, and has a tower at the Western end, containing four bells.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £93 14s., with 75 acres of glebe, in the gift of Lord Portman, and held by the Rev. R. L. Bartlett, B.A.

A school-room was erected in 1863 by Lord Portman.

Thurloxton is in the hundred of North Petherton; in the Deanery of Bridgwater and Archdeaconry of Taunton. It returns one guardian to the Bridgwater Union. Population in 1831, 229; in 1861, 207. It is in the magisterial division of Bridgwater. The parish register dates from A.D. 1538. Lord Portman is lord of the manor, and, with R. W. Strong, Esq., chief landowner. Its area is 555 acres.

## Wellington.



WELLINGTON is a very large parish and pleasant market town, situated 6½ miles South-West of Taunton, 152 miles West-South-West of London by road, 170 by rail, and 24 North-East of Exeter. It was formerly called Walentone. The derivation of its name is uncertain. King Alfred the Great gave the manor of Wellington to Asser, the tutor of his children. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it is thus described in Domesday-Book:—"The same bishop (i.e., Giso) holds Walentone. He also held it in the time of King Edward. . . . There are two mills of 15 shillings rent, and 105 acres of meadow; pasture, one mile long and half a mile broad; wood, three furlongs wide and as much broad. Of this land, John holds of the bishop two hides of the villane's land. The whole is worth twenty-five pounds."

Wellington is on the border of Devonshire, and is a town of considerable antiquity. It is a neat, clean, and respectable place, and of late has undergone many improvements. It consists of five streets. It is on the main road from Taunton to Exeter. The river Tone is on the North side of the parish. The following hamlets or places are also in this parish:—Rockwell Green, where a new chapel has lately been erected; Holywell Lake, Payton, Allamoor's Cross, Wrangway, Westford Standle, Oldway, and Ford.

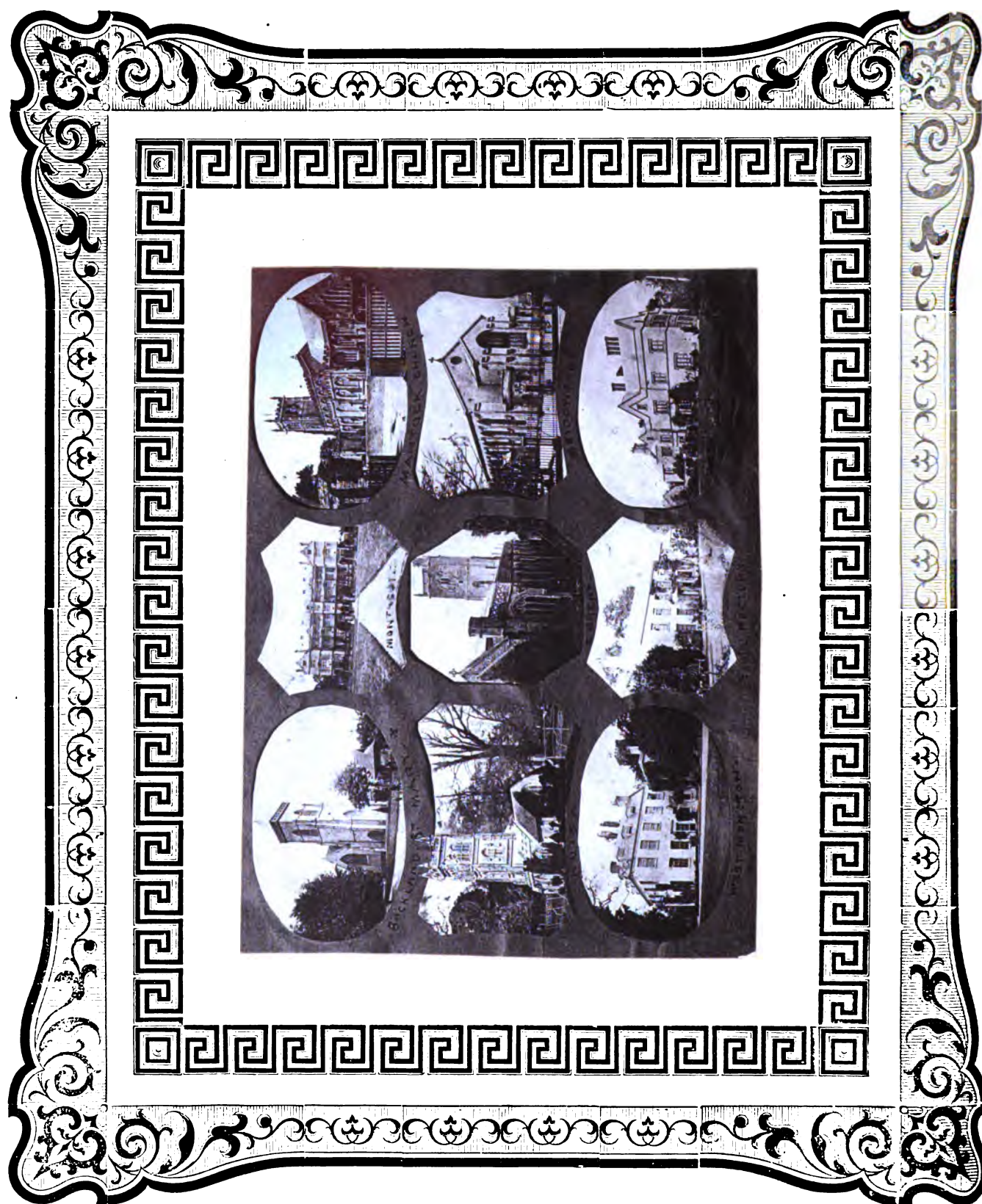
In 1784 the whole town and hamlets contained 740 houses.

The town of Wellington participated in the unhappy attempt of the Duke of Monmouth, and also shared in the butcheries of Jeffreys, who hung three persons in this town, besides transporting many others.

The church is a handsome and lofty edifice, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and consists of nave, North and South aisles, and chancel. There are chapels attached on either side. It is principally built of hard red sandstone, in the late Perpendicular style of Gothic architecture, and is considered to have undergone many alterations in or about the 16th century. The font, which is light and elegant, is placed in the tower entrance, which is spacious and well floored. For a full account of the sculptures discovered in 1848, see Somerset Archaeological Society's Proceedings, vol. 1, pages 30 to 33. They may be inspected at the Museum, Taunton. The pulpit appears to be of Italian design, ornamented with Gothic figures. The arches are lofty, and impart a noble effect to the church. The windows are large, with good tracery. That at the Eastern end has a painting of St. John (the patron saint of the church). The window in the tower is also filled with good painted glass. There are also costly memorial windows. This church was restored about 12 years ago. Most of the free seats are at the West end. The gas-fittings are chiefly of brass, of elegant design. The seats are of stained deal, with carved figures. The chancel is large and handsome, with a new piscina. There are two galleries at the West end, the fronts of which are made of old carved oak bench-ends. The church contains monuments of the Gifford, Jesse, Goddard, Gillinshall, Hawkins, Hickman, Perry, Parsons, Parratt, and Rowe families. In the South chapel is a handsome monument to the memory of Sir John Popham, Lord Chief Justice of England in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. (described elsewhere). The lectern is of brass, of beautiful construction. The organ is placed in the South transept. The painted glass is by Toms.







The tower is a very handsomely embattled building, with numerous pinnacles, and a turret on the South side. It has a clock, and a beautiful peal of eight bells.

The vestry is at the West corner. There is a date on the porch of 1577. At the East end of the North transept is an arched recess, in which is a full-length stone figure, probably that of the founder of the church.

The parish register dates from 1623.

The living is a vicarage, with the chaplaincies of West Buckland and Trinity attached, of the annual value of £1,070, with good residence and some glebe land, in the gift of Mrs. Pulman. The Rev. George Knowling, M.A., of Pembroke College, Oxford, is the present vicar.

The great tithes are commuted for a rent-charge of £984 13s.

The vicarage is opposite the church.

There are National and British Schools, which are well supported and attended.

The churchyard contains memorials of the following families:—Crothwaite, Slade, Soadding, Baker, Carpenter, Holman, Hayward, Tremlett, Kidgell, Chard, Rossiter, Buller, Farrant, Thomas, Oland, Buncombe, Corner, Jones, Blake, Bond, Treacher, Butland, Jarvis, Clarke, Arthur, Webber, Evans, Gub, Birch, and Sharland. There are the remains of an old stone cross.

Trinity Church, at the Western end of the town, is a modern building, and seats about 600 persons. It was erected about the year 1830.

The Duke of Wellington is Lord of the Manor.

The police-station is at South View, towards the railway-station.

On the top of the Blackdown range, about three miles South of the town, is Wellington Monument, erected by subscription to commemorate the victory of the Iron Duke. It was struck by lightning a few years ago, but repaired in 1860.

The principal charities are Popham's Almshouses, endowed in 1606 by Sir John Popham, for poor aged men and women; rebuilt in 1833.

A handsome and lofty Gothic chapel was erected by the Independents in 1861. The front is of flint and Bath-stone. There are large schools adjoining.

The Baptists have a large chapel in South-street.

The Bible Christians, Wesleyans, Society of Friends, and the Plymouth Brethren, have each a suitable chapel.

In 1865 the Baptists enlarged their school buildings, at a cost of £1,150.

The government of the town is vested in a bailiff or portreeve, and other officers, elected at an annual Court Leet.

The magistrates hold petty sessions each Thursday at the police-station.

The soil is various. Clay, gravel and sand are found. The adjoining land is rich, and grows excellent crops of nearly all agricultural produce.

The annual exhibition of the West Somerset and East Devon Horticultural Society is held at Wellington.

A small and very ordinary-looking sword may be seen at Old Court, Wellington, with which the following legend has been handed down in the family:—"After the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth at Sedgemoor by the Royal troops, one of the King's officers quartered himself on the Bridge family, at Westonzoyland, whose estate lay contiguous to the field of battle, and on entering the parlour where the ladies of the house were assembled made use of very ungentlemanly language, and ultimately attempted to insult Mrs. Bridge, upon which her daughter Mary, a girl between eleven and twelve years of age, drew the officer's sword from its scabbard and stabbed him to the heart. She was taken and tried for her life by court-martial before Colonel Kirk, and honourably acquitted. The Colonel ordered the sword to be given to her, and requested that it should be handed down through the Maries of her family, and through them it has descended to its present owner."

The manor was for many years in the possession of the Bishops of Wells.

The County Court is held monthly at the Town Hall. The district runs into Devonshire, and consists of the following parishes:—Ashbrittle, Bathealton, Bradford, Burlescombe, Clayhidon, Culmstock, Hemyock, Holcombe Bogus, Huish Champflower, Kittisford, Langford Budville, Milverton, Sampford Arundel, Stawley, Thorn St. Margaret, Wellington, West Buckland and Wiveliscombe.

The residence known as Old Court, occupied by Dr. Bridges, was formerly the Court or Manor House, and was occupied by the Popham family. Some of the old walls are still standing, and are of considerable thickness and strength.

The market-house is a new, handsome building, in the centre of the town. The markets are held on the ground floor, and a capital hall occupies the first floor. There is also a reading-room. A new great-market for the sale of stock, horses, &c., to be held quarterly, was once established.

The Gas-works are in Champford-lane. Mr. H. G. Crowe is manager.

A Court Leet is held annually, to which a bailiff and other officers are elected.

The manor is possessed by the Bishop of Wells.

A Court Baron is also held annually.

Wellington has two penny newspapers, published on Thursdays, by Messrs. Corner and Outler respectively.

Fairs are held on the Thursdays before Easter and Whit-Monday. The markets are held on Thursdays, and are well supplied.

The charters were obtained by the Bishop of Wells.

The Bristol and Exeter Railway passes on the North side of this parish, and has a station here.

The Grand Western Canal also adjoins Wellington, but is now being destroyed.

Stuckey's Banking Company have lately erected handsome buildings in Fore-street, and have removed from their old bank in High-street.

Bricks and tiles are made here on an extensive scale, and there are two small iron foundries.

Wellington is partly seated on the new red sandstone, and part is alluvium.

The streets are wide and airy, and there are some capital shops, also many capital private houses. The town is well lighted, watered, paved, and watched.

The principal seats are—Old Court House, occupied by Dr. Bridges; The Priory, S. Dobree, Esq.; The Mount, H. Elworthy, Esq.; Westford House, Mrs. Elworthy; Foxdown, the residence of Wm. Elworthy, Esq.; Swallowfield, D. C. Fox, Esq.; Linden House, Sylvanus Fox, Esq.; Court House, Thomas Fox, Esq.; Drake's Place, the property of Mrs. Pulman; Woodlands, W. Thomas, Esq.; Ford House, O. G. Walter, Esq.

In South-street is an old building called the Trade House, formerly used for the weaving trade.

The woollen manufactories of Messrs. Fox and Messrs. Elworthy will bear comparison with any in the West of England. They are on the North side of the town.

The Union Workhouse is a commodious building, on the North side of the town. The Guardians meet every Thursday. The Poor-law Union comprises the parishes of Ashbrittle, Bathealton, Bradford, Chipstable, Fitzhead, Hillfarrance, Kittisford, Runnington, Rad-dington, Sampford Arundel, Stawley, Thorn St. Margaret, Wellington, West Buckland and Wiveliscombe, in Somerset; and Burlescombe, Clayhidon, Culmstock, Hemyock and Holcombe Rogus, in Devonshire.

The town is about three-fourths of a mile in length, and is composed of five streets—named High-street, Fore-street, Mantle-street, North-street and South street. It is open and healthy. The Duke of Wellington takes his title from this town, and is Lord of the Manor, which is an ancient one, and was presented by King Alfred the Great to Asser, Bishop of Sherborne.

Wellington is in the Hundred of Kingsbury West, in the Magisterial division of Wellington. County Court at Town Hall, Wellington; Charles Saunders, Esq., Judge; W. Burridge, Esq., Registrar. Returns four guardians to the Wellington Union. Post-office Savings Bank and money-order offices are at Wellington; also a Government Annuity and Insurance office. Letters arrive from London at 2.40 a.m., and by London day mail at 2.30 p.m. May be posted at Wellington for the West until 8.30; for the North until 4 p.m.; for London, &c., until 10.3 p.m. Carriers leave for Taunton Wednesdays and Saturdays. Is in the Deanery of Wells, in the Arch-deaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 5,132 acres. In 1840 it was computed at 4,574 acres. The population in 1821 was 4,170; in 1831 it was 4,762; in 1861 it was 6,006.

## West Buckland



is a large parish and village, situated five miles South-West of Taunton, and three and a half miles East of Wellington Railway Station. It was formerly so called to distinguish it from the parish of Buckland Saint Mary, in this county. The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Gortnell, one and a half miles to the West; Ham, one and a half to the North, where is a

large brewery and malting establishment; Higher and Lower Ruggin, under the Blackdown Hills, are one and a half miles from the church; Chilson, one mile to the West.

The church is a handsome, spacious and lofty edifice, dedicated to Saint Mary, and consists of nave, North and South aisles and chancel. There are two transepts and a porch. The church is principally built of sandstone, in the Gothic style of architecture, of several periods, and

is considered to have undergone various extensive alterations. Portions of Saxon architecture are visible. Mr. Freeman observed that the nave was seemingly Decorated or Early Perpendicular, with massive octagonal piers, quite unlike the local style. There was a chapel on the south side of the chancel, but not North. In the chancel arch a Devonshire capital was inserted, and much curious patching by the old South-East pier was noticed. The Western tower was of the Wellington type, with two single-light windows on one side of the belfry-turret, the other side being blank. A corbelled pinnacle over the window is pointed out as peculiar, and as producing a bad effect. The roof is a genuine Perpendicular one, with an Italian cornice. The clerestory windows appear to have been cut off, to save expense, at some time, when the roof of the church was lowered. The seats are pronounced by Mr. Parker to be genuine and interesting examples of fourteenth-century work. The font is very rough and mutilated. Most of the seats are original, and deserve particular notice. The pulpit is small, and unworthy of the church. A large gallery was erected about twenty years ago on the West end. In this gallery is placed the organ. There are four small clerestory windows. This church has not been restored or altered for many years; if well done, it would make a very fine edifice. The chancel has lately been restored. Most of the seats are free. There is a beautiful painted glass window at the East end of the chancel, also a smaller one on the South side. The church contains no monuments. There are some flat stones of the Thurston family. The altar-rails and screen are handsome. The tower is embattled, and surrounded by small pinnacles, with turret on the South side. It has a peal of five bells. It stands upon large block stones, on a small hill, and is a conspicuous object in the landscape. The view from the top is very extensive and beautiful. Near the tower are two poplar trees, which are said to have been planted there to prevent the practice of playing fives against its walls.

West Buckland is a chapel to Wellington, and the living is annexed to the vicarage of Wellington, of the joint annual value of £1,070, in the gift of Mrs. Fulman, and is served by the Rev. Geo. Knowling, M.A., of Wellington. The great tithes were commuted to the annual value of £290. There is no rectory or parsonage.

Adjoining the church are schools founded by the Rev.

R. Jarratt, vicar of Wellington, supported by voluntary contributions.

In the churchyard are monuments to the memory of members of the Baker, Richards, Temlett, Thomas, Gay, Ridge, Freeman, and other families.

Richard Blackmore gave £20 to the poor.

The Dissenters have a new chapel at Crossways.

West Buckland is beautifully seated, on the new red sandstone formation. The soil is good, mostly loam, very rich, and produces chiefly capital crops of wheat, beans, barley, oats, &c. There were formerly one hundred acres of common land at Chilson, to which the copyhold tenants had a right.

There is an agricultural society here, in connection with Bradford and other villages.

Clay, marl, and sand, are dug in the parish.

The turnpike-road from Taunton to Wellington passes near this place.

The manor was for many years bestowed on the Bishop of Bath and Wells. A few years since the roads in this parish were described as very narrow, deep and stony, the banks on each side being high and the hedges meeting over head.

There is no revel or fair.

On that part of the parish which lies in Blackdown many small springs arise, which work a mill at Ruggin.

The chief landowners are E. A. Sanford, Esq., Mr. James Hill, Mr. Henry Baker, and Mr. E. H. Bathurst.

There is a large steam brick and tile manufactory adjoining the railway siding at Poole, worked by a company on the limited liability system. There are large tanyards adjoining, of which Mr. Sharland is the owner.

West Buckland is in the Hundred of Kingsbury West. Magisterial Division and County Court district of Wellington. Returns two guardians to the Wellington Union. The nearest money order office is at Wellington. Letters arrive from Wellington at 8 a.m. May be posted at West Buckland until 4 p.m. The nearest railway-station, Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter Railway. Buckland is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton; in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. Its area is 3,671 acres; in 1840 computed at 3,350 acres. The population in 1821 was 750; in 1831 it was 793; in 1861 it was 901.

## West Hatch.



EST HATCH is a rural parish and village, situated among the hills five miles South-East of Taunton, seven miles North-West of Ilminster, and two miles from Hatch Beauchamp railway-station. It was formerly called Hache, and derives its name from its position to Hatch Beauchamp, the entrance or hache of the Ashill Forest. The manor is included in the grant of King Richard to the Church of Wells, and belongs to the Dean and Chapter. The following ancient custom was formerly observed here. The reeve or bailiff of the manor provided (at the lord's expense) a feast on Christmas-day, and then treated each householder to a supper. The country around West Hatch is high, rather rough and woody, the principal timber being elm and oak. The scenery is picturesque. The hamlet of Meare Green is in this parish.

The church is a beautiful edifice, supposed to be dedicated to St. Andrew, and consisting of nave and North aisle, porch and chancel. It is principally built of lias stone, in the Perpendicular style of architecture, and is considered to have been much altered in or about the latter part of the 15th century. The seats are all new. The font is also new, with handsome cover. The chancel arch is panelled, and deserves particular notice. The pulpit appears to be constructed from old carvings. The windows are very plain. About ten years ago the church was so extensively altered that it may almost be considered a new building. Of the sittings 122 are appropriated, and 182 are free. The tower was built by W. P. Gore Langton, Esq., M.P.; his arms were placed in the church by the request of the parishioners. The church contains monuments of the Sealey and Cook families. There is a piscina, and a small quantity of stained glass in a new rose window. There is a small organ.

The tower is large, handsome and old, with crocketed pinnacles and with an outside turret, surmounted by a small spire. It has a clock and a peal of five bells.

The parish register dates from 1600, and the entries deserve notice from the clean and neat style in which they are executed.

The living was formerly a vicarage, held with the living of North Curry, under the peculiar jurisdiction of the Dean and Chapter of Wells. In 1856 it was made a

distinct parish, the living of which is a curacy, of the annual value of £48, with residence; in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Wells, and at present held by the Rev. H. G. T. Elton.

The vicarage is adjoining the church, and was considerably enlarged a few years since. Adjoining are National schools for boys and girls. A Sunday-school is also held here.

The churchyard contains monuments to the memory of members of the Cook, Saviage, Wilment, Greening, Coombes, and other families.

The charities are worth about £5 per year.

There is a capital agricultural association in connection with this and some of the neighbouring parishes.

West Hatch stands upon the lias formation, and a considerable trade is done in the lime burnt from the rock lias stone.

The soil produces chiefly wheat and beans.

There are five acres of common land at Shutwood Green and twenty acres at Stoley's Green.

There are quarries of blue lias stone on the hills.

Part of Sedgmoor belongs to this parish.

The Dean and Chapter of Wells are lords of the manor, and the chief landowners.

The parish is noted for the growth of teasels, which are extensively used in the cloth trade. Large quantities are grown here, and sent per rail to the North of England.

The houses in the parish are not good, and the inhabitants appear poor. The roads are bad, the rocks constantly cropping up through them.

West Hatch is in the hundred of North Curry. Magisterial Division and County Court District of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The Highway District, the polling-place and nearest money-order office are at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 8 a.m.; may be posted at Hatch Beauchamp until 6 p.m. Nearest railway-station, Hatch Beauchamp, on the Chard line. West Hatch is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton; Diocese of Bath and Wells. In 1867 it was rated at £2,616; the county rate was £2,618. Its area is 1,681 acres; in 1840 it was stated to be 1,400 acres. The population in 1821 was 367; in 1831 it was 396; in 1861 it was 432.



## West Monkton



Is a large, populous, and very pretty parish and village, principally situated about three miles North of Taunton and eight miles South-West of Bridgwater. It was formerly called Monecketon, and probably derives its name from the fact that the monks of Glastonbury owned largely in the parish. The manor was given by Kentwin, King of the West Saxons, to Glastonbury Abbey. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"The church itself holds Monecketone. In the time of King Edward it gelded for 15 hides. . . . It is worth £7." In 1293 the monastery of Glastonbury possessed lands in Monkton worth £30 per year. The celebrated old Bathpool Mills (formerly fulling mills), were part of this property. At the suppression of monasteries the manor of Monkton came to the Crown, and was granted by Edward VI. to Sir William Powlet. It was afterwards sold to the Quick family for £1,542, and again to the Warres and Bampfylde. It is now the property of Miss Warre, of Hestercombe. The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Sidbrooke, Bathpool, Monkton Heathfield, Gotton, the family seat of the Beadons; and Walford, formerly the seat of the Sanfords. The parish extends to the borough of Taunton; only one house, however, in the borough returns a vote. The views to be obtained from the higher parts of the parish are most charming, especially above and around Gotton, where some splendid peeps may be had of the town of Taunton.

The church is a large, lofty and regular edifice, dedicated to St. Augustine, and consists of Nave, North and South aisles, South porch and chancel. It is principally built of native rag or slate stone, in the Gothic style of architecture, and is considered to have been much altered in or about the 14th century. There were formerly two chantries in this church; they were pensioned off A.D. 1553. The font is urn-shaped, and peculiar. The cornice of nave is very handsome, and deserves particular notice. It is decorated with cherubs, with outspread wings. The pulpit is a very beautiful bit of Italian design, with heavy sounding-board and flaming urn. The windows appear to be mostly of the Early and Decorated periods. The seats are free in the greater portion of the North aisle. The church contains monuments of the Musgrave, Beadon, Sanford, Looket, Popham, Kinglake, Crossman, Rich, Rundell, Martin, Gatchell, Macrae and Brickdale families.

There is a small brass tablet, dated A.D. 1713. The East window is filled with painted glass. There is a lofty clerestory, lighted with six large windows. The organ is a very good one, and stands in the gallery. The Hamhill pillars and arches are in good preservation.

The tower is lofty, and considered to be very elegant. It is partly covered with ivy, and has a clock and a peal of six bells.

The parish register dates from 1704, and many entries deserve notice. Particulars were described in a paper read before the members of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society by R. M. King, Esq., a few years since.

The living is rectorial, of the annual value of £750, including 55 acres of glebe land and residence, in the gift of the Rev. William Chapman Kinglake, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, who is the present rector. The living and the manor were anciently appropriated to Glastonbury Abbey. The patronage was for many years with the Sanford family. The rectory is adjoining.

There are schools for boys and girls; also a Sunday school.

The churchyard is very pretty and picturesque, with park-like entrance. It contains monuments to the memory of the Searle, Lock, King, Bristol, Easton, Nuttall, Rundell, Sanford, Nash, Green, Martin, Paul, Hedley, House, Every, Clarke, Bond and Musgrave families. The following curious epitaph on a physician deserves notice:—

"Contention 's doubtful where two champions bee:

Thou'st conquered Death; now Death hath conquered thee."

In 1270 Thomas Lambeth founded and endowed an almshouse for eleven poor widows. It was called the Leper House, and is near the East-reach, Taunton. There are also twenty-one and a half acres of land in various parishes. In 1718 Richard Musgrave gave £4 a-year. The parish has land that produces about £44 10s. per annum. John Claymond gave £15 per year to establish an exhibition for boys from this school.

The Independents have a neat chapel at Bathpool, erected in 1865. There were formerly places of worship for the use of Baptists and Wesleyans.

The new red sandstone joins the Devonian series of rocks under this parish. That part near the town of Taunton is on the alluvium. There is a small portion of syenite on the Northern side. The soil is very varied.

Bathpool was a place of great antiquity, supposed to have been Roman. The old Bathpool-lane, near the town, is often called the Roman-road, although, perhaps, erroneously.

There are extensive quarries of a slaty ragstone on the North of the church. Iron-stone and sandstone are also dug here.

Where Court-house now stands, near the church, there was formerly a much larger mansion, occupied for many years by the Brickdale family. It was erected on the site of an old mansion, previously a seat of the Marquis of Winchester.

The parish is watered by the river Tone on its Southern side.

The Bristol and Exeter Railway passes through the parish; also the Bridgwater and Taunton canal.

Creechbarrow-hill, at Bathpool, deserves investigation. It is said to be an artificial barrow, but nothing is known with certainty.

A young member of our very oldest geological family—Syenite—was discovered some forty years ago near Hestercombe.

The chief landowners are F. Brickdale, George Beadon, —Blair, —Winter, R. K. M. King, Esqrs., Capt. Shouldham, Miss Warre, and J. H. Beadon, Esq.

The principal seats are Walford House, the residence of R. K. M. King, Esq., J.P.; Monkton House, the property

of Captain Shouldham; Sidbrook, Mrs. Besley; Springfield, J. Paine, Esq.; Court-place, the property of Mr. Serjeant Kinglake, M.P.; Creechbarrow, Capt. Beadon; Leycroft, Rev. W. Du Sautoy; and Gotton House, formerly occupied by the Careys, afterwards by the Musgraves and Beadons.

The turnpike-road from Taunton to Bridgwater passes about half a mile from the village.

Most of the land is productive.

"Rich is the soil, and merciful the clime.  
The streams unfailing in the Summer's drought;  
Unmatch'd the guardian oaks; the valleys float  
With golden waves; and on hill-sides flocks  
Bleat numberless; while, roving round their sides,  
Bellow the numerous herds in lusty droves.  
Beneath, thy meadows glow, and rise unequal'd  
Against the mower."

West Monkton is in the Hundred of Whitney. In the Magisterial Division and County Court district of Taunton. Returns two guardians to the Taunton Union. It is in the highway district and polling-place of Taunton. Nearest money-order office is at Taunton. Letters arrive from Taunton at 8.20 a.m.; may be posted at Monkton until 4.45 p.m. Nearest railway-stations, Taunton and Darston. Monkton is in the deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton. Diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 3070 acres. The population in 1821 was 1,004; in 1831 it was 1,155; in 1861 it was 1,153.

## Wilton.



WILTON is a parish adjoining and forming a suburb of Taunton, situated six miles East of Wellington and twelve miles West of Bridgwater. It was formerly called Wytton, Well Town, or Fons Sancte Georgii, and is said to derive its name from a celebrated well formerly much visited by pilgrims. The term "St. George" is derived from the name of the patron saint of the parish church. The following hamlets or places are in this parish:—Haines Hill, a picturesque and genteel neighbourhood, laid out about twenty years ago; Ganton or Galsington, which contains a newly-built school-house; and Sherford, near which was formerly the seat of Sir Benjamin Hammett.

The church is a regular and well-built edifice, of consider-

able antiquity, dedicated to St. George, and consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch and chancel. There are transepts attached on each side. It is principally built of rough rag-stone, in the Early-English style of architecture, but is considered to have been much altered about the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was formerly a chapel of Saint Mary Magdalene, Taunton, and was served by a curate of the vicar of that parish. The font is plain, and apparently very ancient. The nave is lofty, and ceiled. The windows are now in good preservation, some of a late date. The church contains about four hundred sittings, of which upwards of one hundred and twenty are free. It was restored and enlarged in 1838, by which means two hundred seats were obtained. At the West end of the church was formerly a fine altar-

piece, presented by the late Sir Benjamin Hammett, representing our Saviour blessing the bread and wine. A beautiful stained glass window was substituted a few years ago. There is a gallery, with the Royal Arms, and a small organ, at the Western end. The church contains monuments of the following families:—Burton, Jeboult, Ditcher, Spurway, Falkland, Hammett, Burcher, Pring, Abraham, Strangways, Smith and Cliffe. There are no brasses, or any stained glass, except the Western window. The chancel was fitted with good oak benches a few years since.

The present tower was erected in 1850. It is a pretty edifice, decorated with Ham-stone buttress and window-casing, and has a Northern stair-turret, with a high pitched roof or spire. It has a peal of five bells. The old tower was an unusually simple square building, of the plainest construction. It was said to have been "cast in a mould," which was shifted up as the work proceeded. Some have considered it to have been a relic of Saxon times. The parish register dates from 1558.

The living is a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of £124, in the gift of Mrs. Cottle. The Rev. J. W. Spencer, B.A., of Pembroke College, Cambridge, is the present incumbent. The residence of the incumbent is at the West of the church, and between are schools for both sexes.

The churchyard (which was enlarged about twenty years ago) contains monuments to the memory of the Muttelbury, Bunt, Prowse, Waldie, Middleton, Leaker, Jeboult, Spurway, Winter, Jeffery, Cox, Follett, Burton, Smith, Baker, Wilcocks, Higgs, Champante, Gane, Hammett, Willie, and other families.

There was formerly a considerable trade done at Wilton in the manufacture of duroys and druggets, &c. A place near the County Gaol, called "Turkey Stretch," was at one time a stretch where the weavers worked, when this trade took the place of the woollen.

The parish of Wilton lies principally on the new red sandstone formation. The soil is loamy; and all kinds of agricultural produce are raised in abundance.

The old highway, called "The Roman Road," runs through this parish. Ramshorn Bridge, near Hovelands Farm, deserves notice as a curiosity. It is very picturesque, and has the reputation of great age—probably much greater than it deserves.

Near Wheatleigh Cross the unfortunate beings who formerly suffered death for their crimes were interred, with a stake driven through their bodies.

According to Collinson, the stone raised in this parish is a coarse brown agate, variegated with rust-coloured veins, and of great hardness.

The lands are rich and fertile, indeed all the environs of the town of Taunton are profusely furnished with foliage.

The manor of Wilton is yet called Fons-George. A stream rising in Pitminster, and another from Buckland, water this parish.

The principal seats are "Belmont," the residence of J. Marshall, Esq.; "Osmond," occupied by W. F. Elliot, Esq.; "The Highlands," the residence of Edwards Beadon, Esq.; "Wheatleigh," the property of Henry Badcock, Esq., J.P.; "Broadlands," and the Haines Hill villas.

The County Gaol was erected here in 1755. [For particulars see page 130 in "West Somerset."]

St. George's Well, near Wilton church, was for ages a noted place, visited by devotees and pilgrims, who received their entertainment at a hospital built here for that purpose by one of the Bishops of Winchester.

Wilton is in the hundred of Taunton Deane. Magisterial Division and County Court district of Taunton. Returns one guardian to the Taunton Union. The highway district, the polling-place, and nearest money-order office, are at Taunton.

Wilton is in the Deanery and Archdeaconry of Taunton. The annual amount of poor relief previous to the new Poor-law was £424. In 1867 it was rated at £5,167. The county-rate was £5,162. Its area is 700 acres. The population in 1831 was 795; in 1861 it was 1,030 (out of which 818 were in the borough of Taunton).

## Wiveliscombe,



**A**N ancient market town and large parish, situate eleven miles West of Taunton, and six miles North of Wellington railway-station. It is seated in a valley, among lofty hills, and was formerly called, from the Saxon, Weevilscombe, or, some think, Weaselscombe, from the numbers of either creature formerly to be found there. Others think it is Wife-lea-combe, from the number of priests who lived here, and served other parishes. There is still another conjecture, which is, that its name may have been derived from the Saxon word signifying "close covering," which described the place, being surrounded on nearly all sides by high hills, covered with beautiful woods.

Wiveliscombe was a place of note in the time of the Romans, although not distinguished as a military post. Tradition states that there are the remains of a Danish camp at Castle Kilns, where bones are often dug up; also a Roman encampment at the manor-house. At the time of the Norman Survey by William I. it was thus described:—"The same bishop holds Wiveliscombe. He held it also at the time of King Edward. . . . There is a mill of fifty pence rent, and thirty-four acres of meadow, and two hundred acres of pasture, and four-score acres of wood. Of the land of this manor three knights hold of the bishop nine hides, and have there 10 ploughs. It is worth to the king 10 pounds, and to the knights fifteen pounds." Compared with payments by other places, it must have been a town of some size. Wiveliscombe is considered a healthy residence. Its situation is in its favour, and adds to its salubrity and cleanliness. Its inhabitants are noted for the great age to which they attain.

Wiveliscombe, with Fitzhead, forms one manor, the manor house being at Fitzhead. Lord Ashburton is Lord of the Manor.

Wiveliscombe is one of the largest parishes (if not the very largest), in the West of England, and includes Langley, Croford, Ford and Whitefield, each about a mile distant, and Maundown, near Huish. Wiveliscombe is a polling-place for West Somerset. It is respectably inhabited, and was formerly the seat of an extensive woollen trade. It

now consists of five principal streets, viz., Church-street, High-street, Golden-hill, North-street, West-street. A portion of the parish is upon the Devonian series of rocks, and another part on the new red sandstone; probably the lower parts on the alluvium.

The excavations lately made by Mr. Gunn in Jewellane have attracted much attention, and have produced some unusual and striking results.

The church is a large building, dedicated to St. Andrew (or the Holy Trinity). It consists of nave, North and South aisles, porch and chancel. There is also an extra aisle attached on the South side. It is built of Devonian sandstone, and intended to be in the Gothic style of architecture. The rough-cast has lately been removed from the exterior. The chancel is a small apse, at the Eastern end of the nave. There is a clerestory, with low pointed windows. The pulpit, desk and gallery front are composed of some of the remains of the old oak carvings saved from the former church, all the other portions having been destroyed or lost at the erection of the present edifice. There is a good organ in the Western gallery. The roofs are ceiled, and "beautified" with plastering. The church was built in the year 1829, and is fitted with modern deal seats, much too high. Under the church are extensive catacombs, entered from the East. It was erected by a charge of £8,000 on the church-rates, to be paid off in 20 years. The church contains 1260 sittings, of which 458 are free. It is tastefully lighted with gas, on brass standards. In the chancel is a painting of our Saviour, which was presented by Sir George Adams. The church contains one or more monuments of members of the following families:—Hancock, Rowles, Boucher, Lutley, Yea, Waldron, Elford, Walker, Harvey, and Naser; also a monument erected by subscription to the late Mr. Hancock. Then there is that curious old monument to the memory of Humphrey and Margery Wyndham, with two full-length stone effigies, of the Elizabethan age. The Wyndhams were probably relatives of that Windham who was engaged in the siege of Taunton, against Blake. Two figures recline on the tomb, dressed in what may generally be called the costume of Queen

Elizabeth's time. The date is 1620. There are two separate inscriptions above, as follows:—

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORIE OF HUMPHREY WINDHAM, ESQ.,  
AND MARGERY HIS WIFE.

Here lies a paire, whom for their equal LOVE,  
Let after Ages term the turtle dove;  
A bee and shée, whose like this Western soile  
Shall hardly match, nay scarce again our ile;  
That Fame herself adores the memorie,  
Of Humphrey Windham and his Margery,  
His matchless wife, whose Heaven-blest skill and cost  
CURED sundry, whom the surgeon held for lost,  
Of dangerous wounds, DYMEIES, And festered sores,  
Sent maymed cripples crutchless from her dore.

To fower score fower of years he did aspire,  
A counsellor, a justice, and a squire.  
Hence was he wise to judge and just to doe,  
Religious, good, and nobly-minded too.  
The orphanes father, and the widowes friend,  
Learned, wise, sincere, and constant to the end;  
Yet from this none-such couple did proceed  
But one sole daughter, faire she was indeed—  
Both of their virtues and estates who lives,  
And in her life their second being gives.  
Here only doth their earthly parts remaine,  
Which at Christ's coming must be fetcht again.

TO POSTERITY.

Heere rest in asured hope of a joleful resurrection through  
Christ Iesus, ye bodies of Humphrey Windham, of Goulder Hill,  
in ye parish of Wiveliscombe, in ye contee of Somerset, Esqr.,  
third sonne of Sr. Iohn Windham, of Orchard, in the same  
contee, knight (long since deceased), and Margery his Wife,  
eldest daughter and co-heir of Iohn Stephenson, of Hodson, in  
ye contee of Hertford, Esqr., who lived together above 43  
yeeares, having issue a sonne and one daughter, wch sonne dying,  
young Elizabeth, their sole daughter and heire, survived Iohn  
Coler, of Barton, in ye contee of Somerset, Esqr.

There is also a brass plate to the Crowter family. The tower is built of Devonian stone. It was formerly adorned with some queer iron-work (intended for pinnacles), which has been lately removed. A word in passing may be said respecting this church. It was unfortunately erected about twenty years too soon, at an age when the principle of Gothic architecture was not understood, or at least before the revival of art had reached this part of the country. It is easy to throw blame upon those who were engaged in its erection; but it should be remembered that if they did to the best of their ability, it is unfair to complain. It is, however, encouraging to find that the more intelligent inhabitants of Wiveliscombe are aware of the fact that much requires to be done to bring their church up to the spirit of modern times, and that steps are being taken to see what can be done, the exterior plastering being removed and pointing substituted; and other improvements are being made.

The tower has a clock, and a peal of eight bells.

The old church is thus described by Collinson in 1791:—  
"It consists of nave, North and South aisles, and at the

West end a tower and spire, with a set of chimes, a clock, and six bells."

The parish register dates from 1536.

The living is a vicarage, with residence, in the gift of the Prebendary of Wiveliscombe, in the Cathedral of Wells. The tithes are commuted at £480 per year, and the great tithes at £630, and are in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; also the church lands, worth £300 per year.

There are large National, Infant and Sunday schools near the church—the infants' below, and the boys' and girls' above. A neat harmonium is in use there.

The Rev. Rich A'Court Beadon, rector of Cheddar, is the present vicar.

The churchyard contains the remains of a cross, with patron saint, and monuments to the memory of the following families—Rocket, Chorley, Field, Brown, Vereyard, Stone, Clatworthy, Kellow, Gamlyn, Lear, Pugsley, Edbrooke, Legge, Middleton, Balman, Burston, Tyler, Davey, Richards, Boucher, Russel, Collard, Back, Bowditch, King, Featherstone, Dunn, Culverwell, Collard, Timewell, Millet, Wambey, Dyer, Bruton, Walker, Holborow, North, Martin, Thomas, Hatch.

Formerly a considerable woollen trade was carried on at Wiveliscombe. There were also manufactories of various coatings, kerseys, cloth and baize. Woollen goods were made for the slave population, and also for the Newfoundland fishermen.

In the Pigott collection of Somersetshire churches, taken between the years 1830 to 1840, is a fine sketch of the present church at Wiveliscombe, also the tower, with the extraordinary iron pinnacles already referred to, and a centre one, or spire, higher than the others.

The view also represents a good Gothic gateway to the South-east of the church.

In 1777 Wiveliscombe contained 359 houses. Elm, oak and ash are the principal timbers grown in this neighbourhood.

The Independents' Chapel is on Golden-hill. It is a large, roomy building, with gallery, erected in 1708, enlarged in 1825. Extensive school-rooms were also built at the same time.

The Wesleyans have a neat chapel.

The market is held on Tuesdays, and the great market is on the last Tuesday in February and July.

The soil is generally good and produces chiefly wheat, barley and turnips. There is also a vein of yellow clay, or ochre, used by tanners and fellmongers. Umber has also been found here. The subsoil is slate on the Western side, and red sandstone on the North and West. There were 500 acres of common land at Maun Down,



where was formerly a capital race-course, nearly two miles in circumference. A fine view can be had from this point.

A fair is held on the 1st of May, and another on the 25th September, for cattle and sheep.

The river Tone runs near, on one side of the parish. It rises in the vicinity. Many capital springs arise in this neighbourhood, and several mills are thereby supplied.

Wiveliscombe boasts of some good shops and hotels, and has lately made great improvements. It is lighted with gas by a company incorporated a few years ago.

The hills around are steep, but very beautiful. The views from the Bampton new road are magnificent, and the road fine.

Wiveliscombe formerly returned members to Parliament, and was one of the towns that petitioned to be relieved. It suffered from the unfortunate attempt of the Duke of Monmouth. Three persons were hung here in 1685 in consequence.

The chief landowner is Lord Ashburton.

The principal seats are The Castle, occupied by A. Ball, Esq.; Oakhampton House, H. Bellew, Esq.; Greenway House, C. Boucher, Esq.; Ford House, Philip Hancock, Esq.; The Bank, W. Hancock, Esq.

There were formerly eight woods, which contained 27 acres.

This parish is also noted for having in it the largest brewery in the West of England, the proprietor being Mr. W. Hancock.

There was a Local Board of Health established in Wiveliscombe a few years ago, who have effected many improvements.

The subsoil of the neighbourhood is a conglomerate limestone, containing many fossils.

The Danish and Roman camps have been mentioned. One is square and the other round, named respectively The Castle and the The Courtneys. The former is in a singularly fine state of preservation. The ruins of an ancient episcopal palace may also be seen. Tradition states that a letter is yet in existence, dated from the palace in A.D. 1492, by Bishop Bourne, to the Lazar Hospital at Langport. Both Roman and Saxon coins have been found near.

Wiveliscombe is in the Hundred of Kingsbury West. In the magisterial division of Milverton and Wiveliscombe. County Court district of Wellington. Returns three guardians to the Wellington Union. The polling-place is at Wiveliscombe. Nearest money-order office at Wiveliscombe. Post-office Savings Bank and Government and Insurance Office and telegraph station. Letters arrive from Taunton at 6.10 a.m.; may be posted at 8.

Nearest railway-station at present, Wellington, on the Bristol and Exeter line; but it is hoped that there will soon be a station erected at Wiveliscombe, by the Devon and Somerset Company, or the purchasers of the railway now nearly completed from Taunton to Barnstaple.

Carriers leave for Taunton on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays; and for Wellington, one from the Golden-hill.

Wiveliscombe is in the Deanery of Dunster. In the archdeaconry of Taunton; diocese, Bath and Wells. Its area is 5,985 acres. It was returned as 5,441 acres in 1840. The population in 1777 was 1,533. In 1791, 1,900; in 1821, 2,791; in 1836 it was 3,407; in 1851, 2,861; in 1861, 2,735.

We have been favoured by several gentlemen with further particulars, which we now add, with many thanks to them for their kindness, for these valuable additions to the history of this interesting town. We are especially indebted to Mr. Edwin Lucas for the trouble he has taken, and to Dr. Edwards, Mr. G. H. Bond, and Mr. R. Tyler, for an account of the charities; also to various ladies for views of ancient buildings in Wiveliscombe, among which is a well-executed drawing of the old Butchery, Corn Market and Lock-up, and a pretty sketch of the Palace arch, in which portions of the ancient portcullis are plainly visible, though partly hid by heavy pointed Gothic arches.

Respecting the origin of the name of the town, some suppose the word to be derived from the Saxon *veil*, many, and *Coombe*, valley, i.e., many valleys.

The town is abundantly supplied with the purest water from the reservoir and conduits of the Local Board of Health. The surplus runs through the principal streets, and flushes the sewers with which the same body have furnished the whole of their district.

We mentioned the name Jew's Lane, and we were about to question the residents in that locality as to its singular title; but a Milverton friend, who stood by, gave us a timely caution that it would be a dangerous question to ask, and strongly advised us, if we valued our life and limbs, to say nothing about it. We shall, therefore, recommend all those curious in legends and old stories to go to Milverton to hear the story of the Jew's boiling.

The Rev. J. Llewellyn was for 25 years the respected minister. He was lately buried in the churchyard.

The gas standards in the church were erected by subscription. The handsome altar-piece painting is by Brockington. The Royal Arms are in front of the gallery.

The chimes, which play a variety of pretty tunes, were put up some years since by Savery, of Taunton. There is



a sun-dial in the churchyard, by which the clock and chimes are regulated.

The old weather-boards of the tower have lately been removed, and handsome quatrefoil pattern belfry windows, of Ham-hill stone, designed by the Rev. John Hancock, have replaced them, conjointly at the expense of W. Hancock, Esq., the parish, and the Rev. John Hancock. It is in contemplation to place stone pinnacles at each corner of the tower, to replace the extraordinary iron-work, which was removed on account of its great weight tending to weaken the masonry of the tower.

In the schoolroom are mullioned windows, a door, and mitred escutcheons on the walls, taken from the old palace formerly in possession of the Wyndham family, near the churchyard.

There are a flourishing parochial library and a branch of Mudie's Book Library at Vickery's post and telegraph office.

The emancipation of the slaves ruined the woollen trade of Wiveliscombe, as the slaves refused to wear the blue cloth, considering it a badge of slavery. Cloths were formerly sent to the West Indies in large quantities.

There are numerous charities. Among the principal are—

**HOLWAY'S AND STORRY'S.**—The income derived from this charity amounts to £39 12s., being leased out on lives. One-fourth part is distributed to the poor residing in the parish and not receiving parochial relief, on the 21st Dec. annually, by the minister, churchwardens, and overseers. The other three quarters are paid over to the churchwardens for the reparation of the church of Wiveliscombe, and for and towards the defraying and paying of any other general charge, taxation, or payment whatsoever, where-with the inhabitants of the said parish of Wiveliscombe should or might be at any time taxed or charged with by the laws of this realm, or by any of them.

**MAUNDOWN, OR NORTH'S CHARITY.**—This charity, amounting to £35 per annum, is also distributed to the poor of the parish of Wiveliscombe on 21st Dec. annually, to such poor persons as do not receive relief of the parish and are residents in the parish, by the minister, churchwardens and overseers.

**POLESHILL CHARITY.**—This charity amounts to £23 annually, and is distributed to the poor on the 21st Dec. annually, as above.

**MONKTON CHARITY.**—This charity amounts to £1 per annum, and is paid to the minister, churchwardens, and overseers, out of a piece of land in the parish of West Monkton, near Taunton, called Trull's Lane, and distributed as above.

**HUTCHIN'S CHARITY.**—A field of land at Croford-hill, in the parish of Fitzhead, at the yearly rent of about £8, to be distributed to the poor as before mentioned, by the minister, churchwardens and overseers, four days before Easter yearly.

**JEROME BROOK'S CHARITY** comprises several cottages in Golden-hill, in the parish of Wiveliscombe, given to men with families; and as an acknowledgment they each pay 2s. 6d. yearly. Formerly they were required to give bonds; but some were allowed to occupy the houses without giving the necessary bonds, and in consequence several of the houses were lost, the occupiers holding them over 20 years without giving a bond.

**ALMSHOUSES.**—These consist of eight dwellings, given to old people, for which each pays 1s. yearly.

There are six great markets, on the last Tuesdays in February, April, May, July, September and November, which are well attended by buyers.

Not far is the native haunt of the Red Deer, stags and hinds being often seen on Maundown and Haddon. Adjoining are their favourite haunts.

The Market-house was erected about 1840, and is a handsome brick structure, with portico and balcony. It contains a commodious hall (where the magistrates meet), an ante-room, butcher's, corn, dry and fish markets, all combined, with a piggery at the back.

The North-east corner of the parish contains large masses of conglomerate lime-stone, capping the "new red" formation, and which is burned at the Castle Tipnoller and Goulds Kilns into excellent agricultural lime, which supplies the neighbouring parishes. Veins of white quartz are used for road stones.

Hematite ore has been found in detached pieces near the surface of the ground at Maundown.

On the South-east are numerous springs, which supply the town reservoir. To prevent the possibility of pollution, the waters are conveyed from the spring heads by pipes leading into the town mains.

The Wiveliscombe slate quarries deserve a more detailed account. They are situated at Oakhampton, vulgarly called Ockington, and are worked by the Wiveliscombe Slate Company (limited). Previous to the formation of the limited company they were worked for a long period of time by various persons, the principal of whom was Mr. Ennor. A roof is now in existence at Henry Bellew's, Esq., Oakhampton, which was made from the surface slate of this quarry 130 years since, thus speaking volumes for its durability. Two colour slates are made at this quarry—blue, the most sought after; purple, considered the most durable. Slabs of large size are obtained, from which hand-

some mantelpieces are manufactured, which when varnished show the beautiful veins caused by the presence of oxide of iron. In addition to this use, they are admirably suited for flooring, window-sills, hearth-stones, water and beer cisterns, ejects, and, last but not least, tombstones, since they resist the action of the frost far better than many of the harder stones. The lowest quarry, from which the finest quality slates are procured, is situated at a depth of nearly 300 feet from the surface. A tunnel of several hundred yards in length carries off the water. The slate and rubble is brought to the surface by the use of a stationary steam engine of eight-horse power, which removes about 200 tons per day, by means of two steep inclines, of different gradients. The company is managed by three directors, and the capital consists of 6,665 shares of £1 each. A large number of men are employed, to the advantage of the town, from which it is situated about two miles. The scenery at and around this spot is much admired. An inspection well repays the visitor.

There are two smaller quarries on the opposite side of the valley. One worked by Mr. John Gunn produces good slate.

Mr. Gunn has shown much spirit in the excavations he has made. The lode runs nearly South-west, and dips slightly to the north. The shaft has never been shored, and is about 109 ft. deep, sunk without coming to water. Water now rises occasionally. It is close to the estate of Mr. C. Boucher, abutting on Jew's-lane, about a quarter of a mile from the town.

Magnesian limestone is reported to have been found in this shaft. The following analysis, by Mr. Henr. M. Noad, R.D., F.R.S., may interest our readers:—May 6th, 1869. — Sample No. 1, a red mineral, very hard and difficult to pulverize; it is almost pure peroxide of iron, and contains 69.7 per cent. of metallic iron and 8 of silica, a valuable mineral. Sample No. 2, a kidney hematite, almost pure peroxide of iron, consists of iron 98.03, silica 1.97, iron 68.63, a valuable mineral.—Sample No. 3, iron feebly magnetic, consists of peroxide of iron 76.60, silica with a little alumina, 23.40, iron, 53.62.

Some lime-stone and the white popple are also found in the neighbourhood. The latter, when used for the repair of the roads, gives them a curious mottled appearance, especially after rain.

The Police-station is near North-street, under the care of a superintendent and eight men.

The Magistrates hold petty session on the third Tuesday of each month, at the Town Hall.

The town was formerly governed by a bailiff and portreeve, who are yet annually elected, with other minor

offices at the Court Leet, from that portion of the town called the Borough, which is situate in Golden-hill, or Goulden-hill, as it was formerly called.

The Borough Inn, in Golden Hill, was formerly named the Cat and Fiddle. The Oboe and Cat are over the prebendal stall in Wells Cathedral.

There is an association for the preservation of the fishing, and it is called the Higher Tone Fishery Association. The district extends from Pouch Bridge to Clatworthy.

The *Wiveliscombe Miscellany and General Advertiser* for Wiveliscombe, Milverton, Bampton and Dulverton, had a short existence of nine months, being published by Mr. Wood, and died a natural death in the Autumn of 1854.

The Rev. A. Phillips, curate in charge, is editing a Parish Magazine; it commenced May 1, 1870, and is printed by Mr. Vickery.

The ceiling in Mr. Vickery's house is much more recent than that in Dr. Edwards'.

The principal timber is beech, sycamore and poplar.

In Mr. Hancock's grounds stands the old court-house.

In the brewery are three large casks, holding more than 750 hogsheads each.

Mr. Lucas has kindly forwarded us samples of some extraordinary-looking stones and minerals dug up at Wiveliscombe. We have transferred them to the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society's Museum, where they may be seen.

There was an account published about the year 1840, in a magazine, giving particulars of the old palace; but we have as yet been unable to see the book.

Miss Strickland's "Life of Elizabeth" gives an interesting account of Wiveliscombe and its ecclesiastical policy. In the history of Wells Cathedral allusion is made on several occasions to Wiveliscombe.

We understand that Mr. C. Waldron some years ago took some trouble to work out an account of the ancient records of this interesting old town; but Fortune has not thrown any of his works in our way.

We have been favoured with a sight of an account of the rejoicings that took place in Wiveliscombe on the Proclamation of Peace in 1814, in which is recorded the fact, that while the procession was walking sheep were shorn, cloth manufactured, and a coat made, which the chairman (Mr. Hancock) wore at the dinner the same afternoon. Space does not allow us to give the particulars in full. [See Taunton and Bridgwater Journal, July, 1814.]

There are some quaint old paintings of the centre of the town, but we could not get a sight of them.

Phelps, in his *History of the Antiquities of Somersetshire*, says, that the Castle Hill, one mile to the East of Wiveliscombe, is a Belgic-British post, occupying the summit of an insulated hill, and that it is protected by a strong vallum, inclosing an area of seven acres. On one side is a limestone quarry, which has been dug through the rampart, and which exhibits a complete section of the fosse and agger. Skeletons have been found there.

Bishop Bourne, when deposed by Elizabeth from the see of Bath and Wells, for having temporarily joined the Romish Church in Queen Mary's reign, resided for many years with his brother at Bourne House, then called the Manor Farm, now in the possession of Dr. Edwards. In a room, supposed to have been the refectory, is a handsome old ceiling, containing in its centre an oval medallion, with figures of Venus and Cupid, with the apt motto, "*Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus*."

In April, 1870, the Board of Trade granted the promoters of the Devon and Somerset line till July, 1871, to complete their scheme. The Wiveliscombe railway station will be on the South side of the Taunton road, close by the turnpike-gate, in what is now termed Court Gardens.

"Jews" was formerly a stannary (a body of Jews had the power of coining money). A raid was made by the owner of Enmore Castle on Jews, and the assailant carried off the cattle, &c. The owner assembled his followers, pursued, overtook, and rescued his property from the marauder on Cothelstone Hill.

Two Misses Bowring, maiden ladies, who resided near Pyncombeane, were the first to introduce a wheeled vehicle in this neighbourhood; and the appearance of it at Hartswell on a Sunday morning was the signal to commence tolling the bell for Divine service. One Sunday morning the congregation waited for the wonted sight, but it did not appear. Some of the congregation then proceeded to their residence, and found the two ladies and their servant dead, their throats having been cut.

There is a cave in Hyden Wood (query Hiding Wood?) at the back of Castle House, where refugee soldiers, after the defeat of Monmouth at Sedgemoor, hid in safety till they could effect a safe retreat.

Some prisoners were sent to Wiveliscombe to be hanged, quartered and dressed like pigs, then re-hung in the butchery of the market-place; and this had such an effect upon the minds of the inhabitants that for some time they refused to purchase meat there.

There is a circular encampment on Maundown, on the property of Mr. John North, which can be plainly distinguished when corn is thereon, by its deep green colour. This place commands a view of Willett Tor and

Cothelstone Beacon, and also of the old Roman road, *via* Langley Marsh, leaving Jews House exactly on the opposite side of the valley, up which the road winds.

Brendon Hill is rich in barrows. Huish Champflower barrow, near Beverton Bottom, the source of the Tone, thirty yards in diameter, is stone knocked and planted with trees. Names of barrows on Brendon Hill:—Elworthy Barrow, a little to the South of Elworthy; Huish Champflower Barrow, a little past Raleigh's Cross; Wiveliscombe Barrow, between Treborough and Withiel Florey; Tripp Barrow, near Tripp Farm, Clatworthy; Leather Barrow, further West than Wiveliscombe Barrow; Cutcombe Barrow, near the latter, and at a short distance from Cutcombe.

"Johnson's Gazetteer" says, "Wiveliscombe is noted for its woollen manufactures, handsome church, and infirmary for sick poor."

The following, from Miss Agnes Strickland's "*Lives of the Queens of England*," may amuse our readers:—"When the learned Bishop Godwin, in his old age, wedded a wealthy widow of London, Queen Elizabeth expressed the most lively scorn and indignation at his conduct, it having been reported that he had wedded a girl only twenty years old. The Earl of Bedford being present when these tales were told, said merrily to the Queen, after his dry manner, 'Madams, I know not how much the woman is above twenty, but I know a son of hers who is a little under forty.' But this rather marred than mended the matter, for one said the sin was the greater, and others told of three sorts of marrying—of God's making, of man's making, and of the Devil's making: Of God's making, as when Adam and Eve, two folks of suitable age, were coupled; of man's making, as Joseph's marriage with our Lady; and of the Devil's making, where two old folks marry, not for comfort, but for covetousness; and such, they said, was this. Yet the Bishop, with tears in his eyes, protested 'that he took not the lady for a spouse, but only to guide his house.' The Queen was, however, irrevocably offended; and to show her displeasure she stripped the before-impoorished see of Bath and Wells of the rich manor of Wiveliscombe for 99 years—about 1597 or 1598."

We conclude with a quaint extract from "*Nehemiah Wallington's Historical Notices of Events occurring chiefly in the Reign of Charles I.*," which gives the following account of a transaction that occurred in this neighbourhood:—"April 23rd. We hear that the forces, which are now straitly besieging Taunton, are so cruel that they murder and hang up every man, woman and child that come out of the town, and threaten to give no quarter to any therein. The condition of these Western

parts is very sad, the enemy's forces have exercised many cruelties upon the inhabitants thereabouts, killing all such as refuse to join with them. They carry away all the women they can find, whose husbands are in Lyme, Taunton, or other the Parliament's garrisons thereabouts, or whose affection to the Parliament is known, and either knock them and their children on the head with the butt-end of their muskets, or set them upon the works before Taunton, that so they may be shot by the ordnance from the town. They have also their dogs to search out any of the inhabitants who fly from them to hide themselves in the woods, and no sooner find them but they kill them, with many unheard-of cruelties which make one's heart ache to mention. We had intelligence that in this month of September Goring marched out from Tiverton with six thousand horse and foot, and seven pieces of

ordnance, and fell on Baunton (query Bampton?), the first market-town bordering upon Devonshire, in which town was no defence but the inhabitants, who stood in their defence as they were able. Being overpowered, they were subdued, the town was plundered, and a great part of it was burnt. The next morning the enemy marched to Minehead, where were two foot companies of the country. The enemy approaching, the most of them fled, and eleven barks were thrust out to sea, filled with people and goods, before the enemy entered, and those were safe; but all else in the town was plundered wholly, and all the ships and barks that were remaining in the harbour were burnt. They killed and wounded many, and, amongst the rest, Captain Jewell, to whom they used very much cruelty. From thence they sent a party to plunder Watchet."



# The Valley of the Tone.

## The River.

Friends I love have dwelt beside thee,  
And have made thy margin dear.—*Longfellow.*



OUR account of West Somerset and the Valley of the Tone demands an account of the river itself. Many matters of interest rise in our minds on this subject, and this is not the first time that the pen has recorded the recollection of the Tone, or the history of a ramble on its banks.

We love our noble old river. We have dived under it, swam through it, skated over it, rowed upon it, enjoyed many a pleasant walk on its banks; we have strained every nerve in a boat-race, have hunted the otter and moor-hen in all excitement; we have fished and angled in its waters, have sailed in barge, boat and tiny steamer on its face; out of it we have pulled the drowning; and last, but not least, have been ourselves drawn out when cramp had rendered our limbs useless, and power and memory were gone. Yet for all this, our affection still clings to our noble old river, and right glad are we to launch a good boat for exercise upon its water. If our readers enjoy one tithe of the pleasure we have experienced, they will have no cause of complaint.

We propose, then, to take our readers to its source, and conduct them step by step along its banks, pointing out

the various places of interest, and noticing such circumstances connected with its history as we believe will be interesting.

The importance of a matter depends on its relative proportions, and in the rich and celebrated Vale of Taunton Deane the Tone is "The River" without any rival; it is the only outfall of upwards of 200 square miles. Although its length is but short, it receives many tributary streams and rivulets. On its banks dwelt animals now unknown in this country, and some altogether extinct. The rhinoceros, the elephant, the wolf, and even the lion, tiger and bear came here to slake their thirst long before the ancient Briton built his hut near its course; and probably on its banks grew many a plant or shrub that was "born to blush unseen, and waste its fragrance on the desert air," and now unknown even to naturalists.

Before going into detail, we propose to glance at the various uses made of our river in days of the past, and see the light in which it has been viewed successively by the various inhabitants of the Vale of Taunton Deane. Its first and great use was, and yet is, of course, to take off the superabundant waters and springs of the said vale. To improve its course, deepen its passage, and to make it



still more effectual as the great water-drain for this vale, large sums have been spent. As soon as the country became inhabited, the value of our river soon became apparent. The untutored savage built his wigwam near its bank that he might have an unfailing supply of water—that great necessary of life even in barbarous times. On its shores he laid wait for the various animals experience told him would come there to slake their thirst. On its waters he would see occasionally the wild duck, the moorhen, or other birds valuable for food; and out of its depths he would draw fish, &c., wherewith to appease his hunger. It also afforded him a security from the attack of warlike tribes, and a hiding-place or safe retreat if unexpectedly molested. As the population increased, the river would serve as the great line of demarcation between the hunting-grounds of neighbouring tribes; and this peculiarity is yet to be traced in the large number of parishes it divides in its course. Although its overgrown, tangled banks would retard its progress, the ancient Briton soon launched his frail boat or canoe of a hollowed tree, or coracle formed with skins stretched on a frame, and found it easier to transfer his game and other goods, even on its wooded highway, than in the primeval forest, without roads or paths. Following down its course he knew would bring him to the head-quarters of other tribes, and further down would lead him to the great sea.

We find, therefore, many villages built on the Tone. In its Western or higher end the names of most of these places end with "ford," as Bradford, Allerford, &c., &c.; and to these points the various paths (the parents of our present roads) led. It is said that the Duke of Wellington, with his usual tact, when wanting to cross a river in the enemy's country, would march straight to a village, making sure he should there find a ford.

The name of the river is said to be derived from the British word Avon—a river, corrupted into D'Avon or T'Avon, thence into Taune or Tone.

Many of the names of the places and villages still serve to indicate their British origin.

Bathpool appears to be derived from Bodpwl—a house by the water.

The name Taunton is said to be a corruption of Tone-town, or the town on the Tone. As the country became more populous, and wars and fightings increased, the chiefs selected a strong site on the river for their castles, which they would be able to moat around, at the junction of several streams. It was at the point where the streams from the Blackdown hills join the Tone that King Ina, in the year 700, built his wooden castle, and gave to

Taunton "a local habitation and a name." Bathpool was probably also a stronghold in early days.

The next important use made of our river was when mills were erected and advantage was taken of its power to grind corn, &c., &c. The old monks and friars were noted for this work, and we generally find that they erected their monastic buildings in the neighbourhood of rivers. A mill was usually attached.

Then we notice that not only was the river to receive all the surplus rain-water and springs, but as sewers became necessary they were allowed to discharge their offensive matters and pollute the pure water; but we trust the day is not far distant when this objectionable practice will be discontinued.

We now approach the time when the Tone occupied its most important character, and, being made navigable, should bear upon its bosom the merchandise of distant countries, and, in short, become the great, though silent, highway to and from this town for all heavy goods. At the time we are speaking of trade and commerce had largely increased, and the few roads that were in existence were suitable rather for pack-horses than for carriages.

But the time came when its glory should pass away to the more useful, but less beautiful, canal. It is said that when the great Brindley was asked the use of rivers, he replied, "To feed canals;" and this was to be the fate of the Tone, and still is to the present day.

Since the introduction of the new system of farming and the extensive use of pipes for land drainage, thousands of tiny streams discharge their waters in the numerous brooks that lead into the Tone, and thus it is called upon to do a duty that "old Sol" formerly did in the way of exhalation and distillation.

Thus we have briefly run through some of the uses that "our river" has at various times had imposed upon it. There are many other purposes, such as angling, bathing, swimming and rowing, &c., &c. In summer its banks have afforded the coolest and most pleasant of walks, with a refreshing breeze, if anywhere. In winter we have occasionally seen merry parties of men and boys skating or sliding on its frozen and slippery face.

Let us now proceed to its fountain-head, on the borders of Devonshire, not many miles from the source of the Exe. By the way, we may remark that Devonshire is indebted to this neighbourhood for several of its noted fishing-streams. We have mentioned the Exe, which rises on Exmoor. The Blackdown Hills, within a few miles of Taunton, supply the spring-heads of the Otter, the Oulm, and the Yarty, which find names for numerous places on their banks.



But let us resume our description of the Tone. Dr. Amory, in the year 1724, wrote a poem on the town of Taunton, in which he thus speaks of our river:—

"The fattening Tone in slow meanders moves,  
Loath to forsake the happy land it loves;  
Forced to the main, by Nature's law, it bears  
Back floating vessels fraught with richest wares."

The poet afterwards glowingly describes the various scenes on its banks, including "sheep with fleeces surpassing Persian silks," "beauteous females, fresh, artless, gentle, innocently gay," listening to amorous swains, and many other equally sentimental and pretty subjects, not forgetting to remind his readers that they are there free from the attacks of "hungry lions or prowling wolves." Those who seek further information we refer to the lines in full. Are they not written in the chronicles of the town of Taunton, by the pen of the venerable Savage?

And now we pass from the sentimental to the practical, and take our readers to a beautiful place on the Brendon Hills, not far from the busy scenes of the miner excavating iron ore to send by the West Somerset Mineral Railway to Watchet, and thence to Wales.

In a retired spot, called "Biverton Bottom," near the parish of Clatworthy, at the extreme or Western end of the fertile vale of Taunton Deane, rises a little spring, so tiny that when we first look at it we doubt if it will ever have power to find its way through the tangled grass and fern with which it is surrounded. But, joining other little companions, it soon gathers more confidence and strength, and by the time it has flowed half a mile, so rapid has been its increase, that it now appears a really respectable and enterprising stream.

The scenery it passes is very beautiful—the hills are full of springs, so green is the grass, so luxuriant is the foliage, and so fine are the numerous ferns and mosses. Many pretty peeps deserve noting, especially Trace-bridge, with its fine slate-quarries and romantic views.

The little Tone having fairly started, it is quickly augmented by the neighbouring brooks and rivulets, and runs on, dividing various parishes near Wiveliscombe, to Kittisford, Runnington, and Thorne St. Margaret, where it receives its first important branch from Langford Budville, and in passing gives a name to "Tonedale," where it is made great use of in the large mills for the manufacture of woollen materials which are there situate. Passing down through a beautifully-wooded valley, it reaches Nynhead, where Art, stepping in to its assistance, has converted this modest brook into a fine and handsome river. This was done, we are informed, by the esteemed owner of Nynhead (Squire Sanford), in his liberal endeavours to help the poor and find labour for them during a time when work was scarce in the neighbourhood. We

have seen large flocks of wild duck and other birds in these beautiful ponds. And here the Tone regatta takes place, and diving and swimming-matches and other aquatic amusements are held. Its waters are crossed by a handsome stone bridge, and the effect of the whole scene is very beautiful.

As if angry to be obliged to leave such an enchanting place, the Tone dashes impetuously down a foaming cascade, and soon becomes the modest and retiring stream, "wandering on with its own sweet will" through fertile lands, where it now makes its first introduction to the active, driving, pushing world; for over it passes the Bristol and Exeter Railway, with its rushing train at the rate of forty miles an hour. Still wandering on, it reaches Bradford, where a massive arch spans its depths, in the place of the ancient ford. Passing Allerford, we reach Hele, where there is a very handsome old stone bridge, with three finely-pointed Gothic arches, said to have been built by monks. Here it turns a large mill, and another just below, at Fide oak, each with a picturesque and foaming cascade. It then rolls on to Bishop's Hull, receiving on its way the collected waters both from the Milverton and Wellington districts. At Bishop's Hull the scenery is very pretty—we may say romantic. On the South bank the land rises almost perpendicularly to a height of nearly one hundred feet, thickly wooded with beautiful firs. The busy mill, the broad "mill-head," the splashing wheel and the roaring and foaming fall of waters, all combine to create a striking and varied picture.

Soon after leaving this pretty spot the Tone is joined by a fine, clear mill-stream from Bishop's Lydeard and the water from the Quantock Hills, and rushes on upon its pebbly bottom to Roughmoor. It is said that mills once stood here. Here is a retired and pleasant bathing-place, and below is a ford occasionally used. Passing on, we arrive at Gibraltar, where are the remains of an old bridge.

It was near this spot that about 200 years ago were encamped the Royal troops when they made the celebrated attacks on Taunton; and it is said they gave it its name in consequence of their having been previously quartered at Gibraltar, in Spain.

We now arrive at the Taunton Bathing-place, which was established a few years ago to supply a deficiency long felt in this town. Here are dressing-rooms, seats, diving-planks, &c., all enclosed with a suitable hoarding to render them private. The river at this point is broad and deep, and considerable expense has been incurred in filling up holes and rendering the bottom suitable. An experienced swimmer is always in attendance during the bathing hours.

to give lessons, and to be ready in case of need, and a boat, a life-buoy, and all proper poles, ropes, corks, &c., are provided to prevent the possibility of an accident.

A few steps to the East bring us to French Weir—a place of notoriety, and formerly much frequented by bathers, but very unsuitable, as it is both public and highly dangerous. In years gone by, never a season passed but one or more lives were lost here. Many conjectures have been made as to the reason, and once, when the water was unusually low in consequence of the long drought, we had an opportunity of observing. At that time there was no water flowing over the weir, and yet a considerable stream was running from the deep weir bed at the lower level. This must either have been fed from natural springs, or caused by the water from the higher or mill-stream finding its way through the sand or gravel bottom and rising in the weir bed. In either case the water rose far colder than in the river, and a person swimming across the cold current would very probably experience cramp from the sudden change of temperature.

Many years ago an engineer of this town engaged for a wager to empty the French Weir; and a whole troop of assistants worked with buckets, pails, pumps, and even fire-engines, both day and night, endeavouring to accomplish this useless work. Crowds of people assembled, and many bets were made pro and con. Great excitement ensued. A regular fair, with standings, &c., was held around the bank; but, after a three days' attempt, assisted by the bystanders, it proved fruitless, doubtless from the springs just mentioned.

At French Weir the river divides into two streams—the higher, or mill stream, and the North and, perhaps, natural bed. Following this branch a short distance, we come to the point called Duckpool, now converted into a free bathing-place, and here the Grand Western Canal terminated in the river Tone. This canal is now destroyed.

Passing the Gas works and several wharves, we observe a short slip cut into a timber-yard, whereby the boats are enabled to discharge their cargo in the very midst of the establishment. There is a pleasant and pretty walk on this bank of the river, although not much used, but which at a small expense could be made a good promenade.

We now come to the "town of the Tone," situate about half the distance from the source of the Tone to its outfall. Leaving Taunton Castle on the South, we arrive at North Town Bridge. This is the point of confluence of the mill-stream, and is a fine open piece of water.

We must now retrace our steps, and go back to French Weir and follow the Southern branch, which, as it forms the mill-head, receives a large number of tributary streams. First we have that from Trull; next, one from the Black-

down Hills; and, thirdly, that one called "the Rhine," which rises at Fossbrook, near Pitminster, and anciently supplied Tauntonians with "pot-water," as it was called, previous to the general use of pumps and wells. This stream was taken advantage of to supply the moat that surrounded Taunton Castle. On the Southern side it was crossed by a drawbridge and portcullis. The Tone formed the defence on the Northern boundaries. Here, though narrow, the river is deep and rapid, and supplies the motive power for the Town Mills, said to have been formerly powder-mills, belonging to the Castle property.

We now arrive again at North Town Bridge, a heavy erection, most of which was built in 1834. This bridge consisted formerly of six small arches, but was afterwards rebuilt with two openings only. As it was proved that much land was flooded above the bridge in consequence of a want of water-way, the "island" between these bridges was removed and a large arch constructed in its place. An esteemed fellow-townsmen, in a poem entitled "Taunton," thus speaks of the old bridge, the generation who erected it, and the navigation of the river:—

"They bridged the Tone, the Northern shore to win,  
And break the bonds that hemmed their borders in.  
There was it first the river to restrain,  
And in new channels force it to the main.  
Slave of their will; coerced their chains to wear,  
And on its breast unwonted burdens bear.  
These their achievements, fruit of early days,  
If now eclipsed, must still extort our praise."

Previous to the erection of a bridge over the Tone, it is said there were broad paved fords across the river, and that part of the ancient paving was discovered not many years ago. Before we leave this spot we must not forget to mention "Swan Island" and its inhabitants—a recent adornment supplied by the public spirit of a neighbouring resident.

This part of the river forms the termination included under the name of the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal, and is surrounded on each side by numerous wharves and coal-yards. Formerly this was the most busy part of the town. There is a public landing-place at the North-east corner of the bridge, although it is not now used.

For the next half mile the river is of good width and depth, and here "young Taunton" delights to take fresh air and exercise, in pleasant rows during the summer months. It is to be regretted that this capital amusement is not more general. Passing down, we notice on the South bank the tower of St. James; and adjoining formerly stood one of the finest and most celebrated Ecclesiastical buildings in the West of England. We allude to Taunton Priory.

The Rev. Thomas Hugo has in his possession some very

curious relics that were taken from the bed of the Tone, near Taunton Priory. One is a Bulla of Pope Sixtus IV., and another a beautiful carved knife-handle; also girdle ornaments, with inscriptions, &c.

Here also stood a beautiful church, dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul, of which not a wreck remains. As we sail down we observe, however, an old building, with some good stonework, &c., surmounted by a cross. This is said to have been the Priory barn; but, although now used as such, we do not consider it was built for that purpose.

We now arrive at Firepool, where is a "pound," or lock, that forms the connection with the Bridgwater Canal, which is here supplied with water from the river.

Here also are a weir and waterfall, where the over-water descends to the lower stream. The pretty fall, the little island, the rapid river, and the open pool or weir, form altogether a pleasant scene, and the views of the town and of the railway station are also good.

Here terminate the sewers of the Northern portion of Taunton, to the great annoyance and injury of the fish. The soil at this spot is peculiar. There appears to be about six feet of good black earth, and under this a bed of quicksand—a composition of half sand and half water.

A little work, entitled "A Ramble by the Tone," written by the Rev. T. Hugo, gives an account of the next mile of the river, as far as Bathpool.

It appears that there was formerly a road from Priory to some buildings, called "Firepool Mills," belonging to the Taunton Priory, and the remains of an old bridge over the river are yet to be seen. As these mills interfered with the navigation of the river, they were removed many years ago.

It seems that the river has been here much widened for the convenience of boats, and its Northern shore protected by strong, stone walls, on which are paths; but the "towing-path" is on the opposite bank. We now come to a curious-looking place, which appears like an ancient weir, but which probably was caused by an overflow of the river, which had washed away the Northern bank.

We next arrive at "Priory Lock"—a massive construction, with double flood-gates to enable the boats to pass up and down the different levels of the river—in our younger days much used, but now covered with moss. Passing a wooden bridge, we come to Priory Weir, into which the water rushes down in a picturesque manner; and adjoining is Obridge Weir. This spot was formerly noted as a boat-building establishment, but now, alas! only for being the outfall of the Taunton drainage. Large quantities of "material" are here deposited in the river, and a company was formed some years ago for its conver-

sion into manure. It is, however, the duty of the Taunton Board of Health to form "deposit or catch-pits," which should receive this material and thus prevent it from polluting our river and being a nuisance to persons living on a lower level. In many rivers the fish have been killed by the poisonous matter; and this has happened once or twice, we are told, in our own Tone.

At Obridge Weir was formerly a mill called "Tobrigge," probably a corruption of "Two Bridges," which were doubtless there over the various branches of the river. Not many years ago there was here a road into the town from Cheddon, and parts of it are yet in existence; but at Obridge Weir it is destroyed. A building, probably a "grist" mill, either in the possession of the Taunton Priory or of Taunton Castle, was removed when the river was made navigable. But now very little use is made of the Tone for navigation.

Proceeding down on our walk or voyage of inspection, we next come to the union of the "backwater" with the main branch, and here has lately been erected a wooden bridge in lieu of a dilapidated one. The new bridge is on the "tension" or suspension principle, and is somewhat curious in its construction. One pleasant evening last summer (1869) we were quietly sitting on its rails, admiring the scene, watching the fish rise and the water-rat perform his ablutions, when we were puzzled by observing the stream of the "backwater" going the wrong way, or, in other words, running back to Firepool. We first satisfied ourselves we were not dreaming; next that our organs of vision had not deceived us; and, lastly, that no extraordinary convulsions of nature had raised Bathpool "above that station in life in which Providence had placed it;" but still the fact was the same. Broken branches floated off and disappeared on their upward course in a most marvellous manner, when at this very time Fortune sent to our rescue a regular old "Tonite," with whom we had often chatted about our old river, and we at once called his attention to the fact. He at first asserted that "twarn' so," but was soon satisfied of his error, and then, rubbing his head, said "he nivr had a knowed the river come such a game afore." However, further investigation proved that the Tone had not so far forgotten itself as to break one of the first laws of nature, but that the incident arose from the fact that the outfall at Bathpool had been suddenly closed, and the water rising to its higher level in consequence, at this point met the downward current from Obridge Weir, and had consequently forced its way up the back stream.

Again we pursue "the even tenour of our way." On the right we notice a small, curious-looking hill, formerly

covered with old trees, and which has an artificial appearance about it. The worthy tenant of the neighbouring farm-house informed us the tradition is, that it was thrown up for warlike purposes when Taunton was invested by the Royalists, about two centuries ago; but we think this doubtful. It is called Conigar Hill, and is in shape, though not in size, something like its namesake at Dunster. It seems composed of a soft kind of grey sandstone, and, it is said, supplied materials for the various locks and bridges, &c., erected by the Tone conservators. We would also mention, in passing, that tradition says that the sandstone of which Taunton old towers were built was taken from a quarry a little to the east of this hill.

Winding round, and noticing the close proximity of the railway, we next arrive at "Half-locks"—a contrivance to increase the depth of the water during drought. But very slow work conveyance must have been in those days, for our old friend, the "Tonite," informed us that it often took three to four hours for boats to pass up or down half a mile while the water was being raised or lowered.

We now arrive at "Swanneck," so called from the peculiar bend the river here makes, and, observing the old London road on the right and the new London road (or railway) on the left, we arrive at Bathpool—now a collection of a few houses, but considered to have once been a British town. Its derivation has already been given. From time out of mind mills have been in existence at Bathpool. At present they are used for grinding corn. There was formerly also a "fulling"-mill here, the property of the Abbot of Glastonbury.

It appears from the investigation of ancient documents that there were many disputes and law-suits respecting the obstruction these mills caused to the passage of boats in early days, and that it was the custom to discharge the cargoes from one boat to another on the higher or lower levels. Complaints were also made that in consequence of alterations at "Bathpole Mules," the King's highway adjoining was flooded, to the great discomfiture of his Majesty's lieges, and also that the fish could not pass up and down the river as heretofore.

Before the invention of locks and the improvements in river navigation a "cist" had been constructed by the Abbot of Glastonbury, which enabled boats to pass up and down the various levels, but only during a flood; consequently it could have been of little use. The remains of this ancient "cist" are yet visible.

At Bathpool are two pretty falls of water, and the place was formerly full of interest; but modern improvements have made great havoc with the picturesque. The attempted destruction of the old British or Roman road

we trust the conservators of our highways will never consent to allow.

It was the custom in old England during Roman Catholic times to erect a cross at three crossways, and history informs us that there was one called "Bathpole Cross," and here pious travellers repeated their Ave-Marias and Pater-Nosters, and counted their beads.

Much may be said about Bathpool, or Creechbury hill adjoining, some considering it of artificial construction—either a hill of communication, or a camp, or possibly the burial-place of an early king. Our own opinion is that it is a natural hill, although probably used for one or all of the before-mentioned purposes. We think we could adduce many reasons for our opinion; but space will not permit.

We remember that it was here that considerable trouble was experienced when the Bristol and Exeter Railway was constructed; indeed, we have heard that there was more difficulty at Bathpool than at any other part of the line. New bridges were built, fell in, were re-built, and our old friend the Tone was provided with a new channel and flood-gates.

Between Bathpool and Creech the whole country is much cut up by roads, rivers and rails. We will mention some—the River Tone, the Bridgwater and Chard Canals, the Turnpike and old British roads, the Bristol and Exeter and Chard railways, two lines of telegraph, besides numerous parish roads. It was near here that the express train ran off the line some years ago, and we well remember the awful scene then presented.

We now pass close to the old village of Ruishton, or Rushtown, with its fine old tower, which is said to have been intended to carry a spire, and indeed, has all that appearance.

A wide and substantial bridge has lately been erected on this spot to carry the Chard Railway. The river is here wide and deep; the soil on either side is soft, and requires great depth of foundations; and as large quantities of water are often swept down in time of floods, a wide and large bridge is necessary.

The Vale of Taunton Deane is shaped somewhat like a large lipped bowl, and Creech is the lip, or only exit for all its waters; and as there are hills on every other side, the various railways and canals here run to avoid their heights. It is near this spot that the Blackbrook stream finds its way into the Tone, after draining all the district around Stoke St. Mary, Staple, Thurlbeer, &c.

Near is old "Blackbrook Inn," a relic of ancient days, for it still retains its antique form. And here, when Taunton lost its charter, its old Corporation adjourned, and to this

day hold their annual meeting, and enjoy their dinner. As it may be new to many we give a copy of the yearly invitation as well as we can recollect—

"To A.B. Know all men that ye are hereby required by the Maire of Blackbrooke to assist him in ye discussion of divres weightie and urgent matters at ye Inne at Blackbrooke, on ——— daye, at 2 of ye clock. Herein fail not at YORE PERIL."

Trusting our readers will pardon this digression, we resume our narrative at Creech St. Michael. Here also, as at Bathpool, are mills, weirs, fine waterfalls, &c. ; and the Tone receives the water from the railway, which, being under the level of the river, is pumped up by a windmill, and occasionally by horse power. Should these mills cease working during the rainy season, no trains could pass, as the waters would rise and quench the fire of the engines.

At Creech is a massive bridge carrying the road, and which has lately been improved and widened, by the addition of a path on each side, supported by iron brackets.

The Tone is here a broad and deep river, with few or no fords, and answers to the description given of it by Dr. Amory 150 years ago, to which we have already referred :—

Forced to the main, by Nature's laws, it bears  
Back floating vessels fraught with richest wares ;  
And diff'ring products, from earth's diff'ring shores,  
Gather'd by commerce, lavish on us pours.

We journey on, and arrive at Ham Mills. Here are also weirs, locks, &c., which are the last on the river. A considerable trade was carried on some years ago, when a large district of the country around Chard and Ilminster was supplied with coal and various imports from this place.

The Tone here becomes a tidal river, but no tide can go up beyond Ham, and can only reach this spot occasionally. The country around is very low, flat and swampy, and the soil soft. We presume that nearly the whole district from this point eastwards was once under the sea, when Glastonbury was the island of Avelon, and the abode of the planters of Christianity.

Passing down our river we notice the entrance of a few sluggish streams ; and leaving on the right bank the fine old village and church of North Curry, the picturesque windmill, and the busy quarries of Knapp on the right, we arrive at the pumping-engine which supplies water to the adjoining canal ; and here resides the canal inspector, who has a pretty little steam-vessel, which may occasionally be seen on the Tone, and in which we have enjoyed a pleasant trip on several occasions.

We are now in the moor country, and successively pass the Haymoor, Currymoor and Stanmoor. Between the villages of Stoke St. Gregory and East Lyng we notice the absence of hedges and large trees, but see plenty of alders,

withies and rushes, and flocks of cackling geese are abundant.

Near the left bank we passed what was once a very fine Priory and Preceptory, called Buckland, or Bokeland. It was situated near the village of Darston ; but now nothing can be seen save a finely-lettered cross (to the memory of "Sister Alienor"), and the remains of the various large fishponds usually attached to these buildings, which were necessary in Roman Catholic days to afford a constant supply of fish for their numerous fast-days.

Buckland priory was inhabited by a community of women, belonging to the Order of Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, and was the only Preceptory of the kind in England. For a full account of this interesting old edifice we refer our readers to the volume of the Somersetshire Archæological Society for the year 1860. By referring to an ancient map it appears that Buckland was occupied by Lord Hawley as a residence about 200 years ago.

Not far away is King's Sedgemoor, where, we need not remind our readers, was fought the great battle between the Duke of Monmouth and the Royalist forces, about two hundred years ago, and where the blood of so many of England's brave sons stained the soil in defence of civil and religious liberty. The ground is yet full of relics, and old accoutrements are constantly turned up in the neighbourhood. Near Curry Rivel stands Burton Pynsent monument—a fine obelisk, erected about 70 years ago by Pitt, Earl of Chatham. This beautiful pillar was once sold and about to be pulled down, for the value of the stones and the copper said to have been used in the cramps, &c. A number of gentlemen, however, came forward and subscribed a sufficient sum to purchase it, and so saved the county from such a disgrace.

We now approach a spot most interesting, not only to Tauntonians, but to all Englishmen ; for close to the South bank of the Tone lies Athelney, or, as it was formerly called, "the island and forest of Athelney," which was occupied as a retreat for more than twelve months by the celebrated King Alfred, when the Danes had vanquished his feeble army and over-run his kingdom, A.D. 879. In this, one of the darkest times of Britain's history, the wisdom and virtues of one great man were sufficient to restore peace, security and happiness to his bleeding country. It was probably at this place that the well-known circumstance occurred when the wife of the herdsman so rated the unknown king for allowing the cakes to burn.

At this solitary rendezvous this wise and good man employed his leisure time in the pursuit of those various arts and sciences which in that time of ignorance and

barbarism were known to so few. He was a clever musician and scholar, and translated the Psalms of David into English. He matured many just laws, the remains of which are yet to be found in the Statute-book.

And oft, methinks, our own great Alfred's feet  
Have lightsome tripped along these glens of green,  
And caroll'd sweetly with his kingly voice,  
And touched with skilful hand his sweet-toned harp,  
Until its soul-inspiring echoes flew  
From cot to cot within the circling hills !

Fled are those royal days, as sun-rays bright,  
And still'd the graceful hand of him who played,  
With rarest touch, his harp of gleaming gold  
Adown the banks of the free, flowing Tone,  
Whereon he lov'd with cowl'd monk to speak  
Of wisdom's lore, which he so well did know,  
Or with some soldier, bold and brave and true,  
Of onset made upon the daring Dane.

"*Wild Flowers*," by T. P. Bell, 1865.

When peace was restored and the king again reinstated, Alfred, in commemoration of his providential protection, erected and endowed a monastery on this spot, but of which now not one fragment is visible, although broken tiles and other relics have occasionally been turned up by the plough. Tradition says that there was formerly a cave on this little hill, although nothing is known of it now. A small obelisk was erected by Sir John Slade in 1801 to mark the spot, and it is engraved with a suitable inscription. Camden says that this place was formerly called *Æthelenyey*, i.e., "an island of nobles," and that there was formerly a bridge here, between two towers, built by Alfred.

The monastery was on the small portion of the island that was dry, which was only about two acres in extent.

Near Athelney was found, many years ago, a very noted curiosity, which doubtless was once possessed by the great king. It has the appearance of a jewel, or seal, and contains an inscription in Saxon, thus translated : "Alfred commanded me to be made." It is now in the Oxford museum.

Nearly 1,000 years have rolled by, and the little kingdom that Alfred so adorned has advanced in arts, science, extent and population beyond all those of antiquity ; yet with what pleasure does the memory recall the times and deeds of that great and good man ! How applicable are the words of the inspired and more ancient Jewish king and harpist, which were rendered into English by Alfred himself—

The sweet remembrance of the just  
Shall flourish when he sleeps in dust !

Before we leave this interesting place we would notice the name "Isle" of Athelney. If we visit it during the summer months we may perhaps find a difficulty in understanding the term ; but if seen in such a time as

when we paid it our visit, it is in reality an island. On the day to which we refer there had been a quick thaw of a heavy fall of snow, and consequently the Tone was full to its very banks, and the whole country for miles around was flooded, with little dry spots here and there.

We selected the South side for our downward journey, and returned on the Northern bank, and the sun was bright, although the wind was exceedingly rough—in fact, blew at intervals a regular hurricane. We endeavoured to follow the "towing-path ;" but the spray was blown so violently from the river that it soon would have drenched us. However, we braved it as best we could, until the waters covered the path and prevented our finding the way ; and as we had no wish to ride into the river and put the honourable Corporation of Bridgwater to the expense of an inquest, we prudently beat a retreat, and followed the adjoining road for the rest of our journey.

The country is divided into fields by numerous ditches or dykes ; and to prevent travellers riding into those that enclose the road, rows of trees are planted on each side. These are annually "headed," and supply the cottagers with wood.

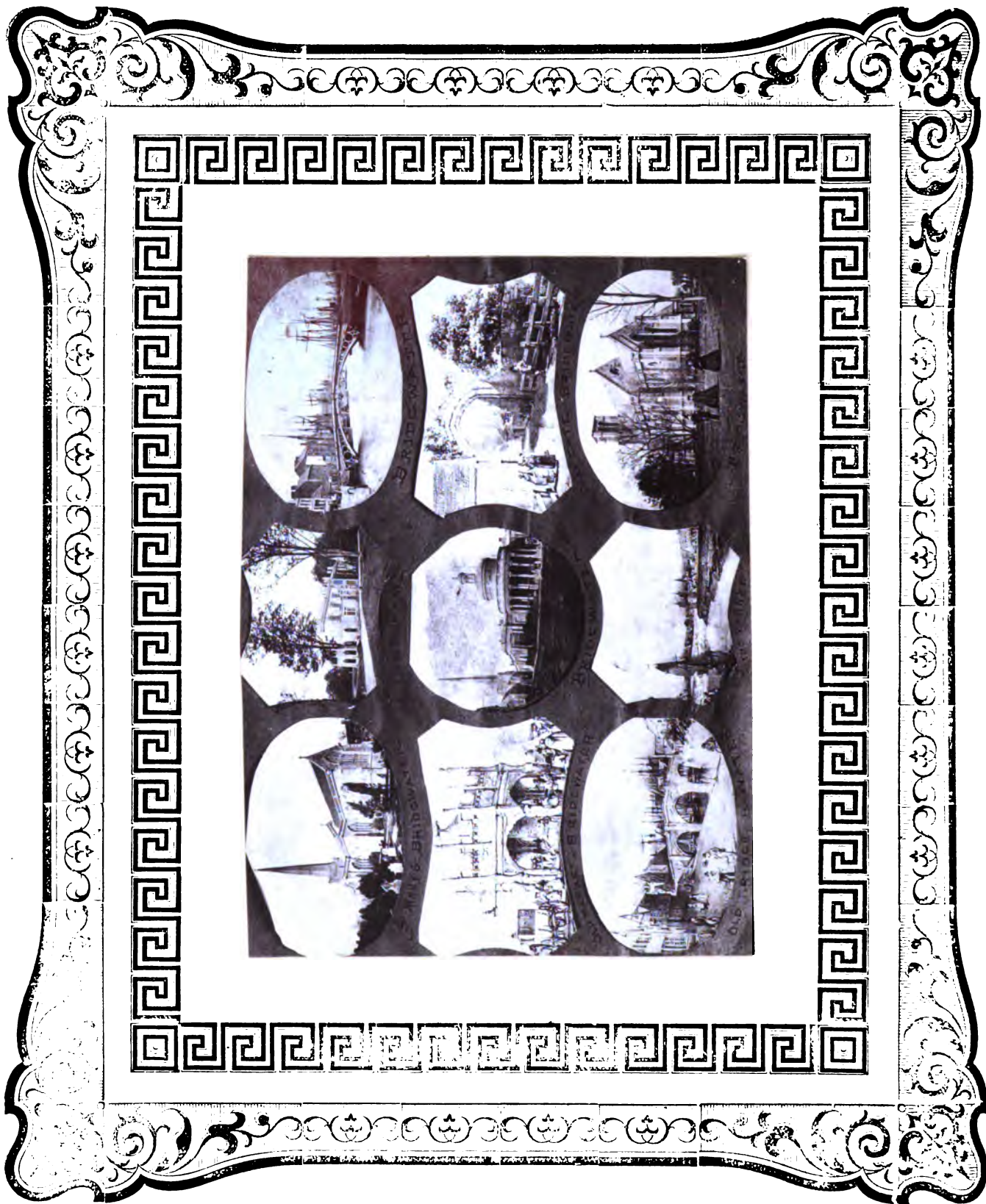
We could not help being struck with the extreme poverty of the people. Not a single house of any attempt at respectability was to be seen, and many of the cottages were mere huts, such as would have been a disgrace even in the days of good King Alfred. To provide against the constant floods most of the cottagers had small boats, which lay tethered in the dykes opposite their doors.

Ague and rheumatic disorders are said to be very common ; but it is to be hoped that the means now being taken to improve the drainage will lessen these evils.

The employment of the people, besides agriculture, is in the cultivation of withies and the collection of reeds, rushes and sedges, which are manufactured into baskets, mats, and similar articles. Others are employed cutting turf, and some in fishing. Although the Tone is now little used for navigation to the west of Ham Mills, in consequence of the better service of the canal, yet many boats pass up and down in this neighbourhood. The river is gradually getting narrower, and requires widening in many places before it is fit to receive the extra quantity of water which the new pumping-engines throw into it. One of these powerful pumps has been erected adjoining Athelney railway-station, and promises to be of very considerable service to the surrounding districts. A curious circumstance has been brought to light in preparing the foundation for the new engine-chimney. It was found necessary to drive "piles" to a







depth of about forty feet below the surface to reach the original earth, the whole of the soil above it being composed of various strata of turf and alluvial deposit washed down by the river from the neighbouring heights during floods, proving the truth of the statement that all this part of the country was formerly submerged. The river itself has consequently been also raised, and is now in many places above the surrounding fields. It is kept from overflowing by strong banks, on which are the "towing-paths." It is necessary to remove all trees and bushes that grow beside the river next the towing-path; they would otherwise obstruct the ropes with which the horses pull the boats and barges. In riding along the towing-path the traveller is puzzled occasionally by finding it suddenly come to an end, and he may, perhaps, see it on the opposite side some quarter of a mile beyond. It is usual in these cases to take the horse into the boat, and land him on the other side. When the moors are under water, and the sun brightly shining upon the smooth surface, a beautiful view is obtained from the surrounding heights. When a full tide meets the waters of a flood they rush over all their banks, and often lie for weeks, and sometimes months, before they subside. Occasionally hay-ricks, gates, sheep-cots and other articles are seen floating about, and when a sharp frost succeeds a flood a beautiful place is created for skating, as we may travel ten and occasionally twenty miles by making a proper selection of water.

There seems to be little doubt that the great King Arthur, of round-table celebrity, occasionally occupied the various isles that crop up in the neighbourhood; and there can be no doubt that the swamps and morasses formerly so numerous in this part of the country were often used as places of retreat in time of trouble, as none but the initiated could find a safe path through these marshy wilds;

For here full many a crowned head hath sought  
A safe retreat from fell invading foe.

We have now arrived at Stanmoor Bridge, and here our old friend the Tone joins the Parret, which runs from Langport and the neighbourhood of South Petherton and Crewkerne, to Bridgwater. The two rivers, which we shall take the liberty of naming the Parrett-cum-Tone, now form a large stream, since we cannot allow the idea that the Tone is lost in the Parrett, for examination will prove that the former is about as important a stream as its rival, and at floods far more so, as it drains a much greater area of country; and so, to prevent a quarrel, we propose to treat them as companions. Well, then, these worthy rivers combined run on to Borough-

bridge, where is a pumping-engine, a capital stone bridge and a new church. The old church has a peculiar appearance, being situated on the summit of a small, but steep hill; and as the parishioners objected to the labour of climbing up such a precipitous walk, they allowed the old church to become a "modern ruin," and erected a new one at the foot of the hill.

The rivers Parrett-cum-Tone are here much used for inland navigation, as a considerable heavy trade is carried on at Langport. They run on through the same low, swampy country we have already described. "Somerset Yard" is about one mile from Bridgwater. Here they are crossed by a large wooden bridge, some years ago destroyed by a flood, but since restored, which carries the Bristol and Exeter Railway. Adjoining are extensive works for the manufacture of the railway carriages and trucks used on the Bristol and Exeter Railway and their branch lines.

We are now in the land of bricks and tiles, hundreds of thousands of which are annually sent to all parts of the country.

There is a peculiar kind of soft sand or scouring-brick only made here from the deposit of our two rivers, and which bears the name of "Bath bricks," which are unequalled for quality; in fact, the Bath bricks are to be met with in every part of the world.

Proceeding downwards we arrive at the ancient town of Bridgwater, where was formerly an old bridge, begun in the days of King John and completed in the reign of Edward the first, by Sir T. Trivet, whose arms, being a trivet, were affixed to the coping.

This bridge was provided with a drawbridge and gate, and occasioned much fighting during the civil wars of the Stuarts, for here the bold cavaliers and daring Roundheads met in deadly combat. As the piers of this bridge obstructed the water, they were removed in 1796, and the present cast-iron bridge erected by the Coalbrookdale Company in its place. It is now proposed to remove this one, and build another without the inconvenient rise in the centre.

On the western bank stood Bridgwater Castle, which at one time was a very strong place, but is now destroyed. A few relics, however, are to be met with upon careful examination.

Passing the bridge we find numerous vessels and ships, mostly coasters, but some of considerable size, chiefly from the ports of Russia, Prussia, and the colonies. A large and increasing trade is done here, as the fact of there being three steam-tugs employed will prove.

Although the river has a name for danger, and freights are consequently higher than at many other places, yet

vessels of above 200 tons burden can reach the port. At spring tides the river rises to a great height, and is noted for a peculiarity almost confined to itself. This phenomenon is called "the Bore." At such times there is a sudden swell, or head-water, varying in height to six feet, which rushes up the river with great impetuosity, and occasionally causes damage to the shipping.

There was formerly near its banks a Priory of Grey Friars, and a Leper Hospital. Both were destroyed at the dissolution of monasteries in Henry VIII.'s reign.

Proceeding onwards, between busy quays and wharves, we arrive at "The Floating Dock or Basin"—a fine artificial sheet of water, which forms the termination of the Taunton Canal, with locks which communicate with the river, and allow numerous vessels of considerable size to lie alongside. Proceeding, we pass an extensive gypsum establishment. Adjoining, the Bristol and Exeter Railway Company are erecting a movable bridge, to connect the railway with "the basin." Lias rocks and alabaster, from Langport and Watchet, are brought here by river, made into plaster-of-Paris, and sent off by rail and vessel to all parts. Near the bank is Chidley Mount, where Roman coins have been found, and out of whose ruins some think Bridgwater sprang.

The river now pursues its course in a very serpentine direction. There is an island called Dunball, said to have been clandestinely formed in one night by cutting a channel 40 yards long across an isthmus.

At Dunball many vessels are constantly discharging their cargoes of coal and receiving brickyard goods, of which there are large works adjoining. Here are also extensive coke furnaces, which supply the Bristol and Exeter Railway with fuel. The great rhine or dyke which drains the moors here discharges its muddy waters through flood-gates into the river.

Leaving Pawlett, with its picturesque tower (a sea beacon), on the right, we observe the village of Cannington on the opposite bank, and remember that here there was formerly a flourishing Priory of Benedictine Monks. It has been in the possession of the Clifford family for many ages. Tradition says it was here that the fair Rosamond was born and educated. A voluminous account of this Priory may be found in the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society for the year 1861-2. Here is also a fine mill-stream, which at present discharges into the "Parrett-cum-Tone;" but it is proposed to carry it under the river, through an iron pipe, to supply the country on the opposite side. These lands are known by the name of "Pawlett Hams," and are destitute of good water, but are celebrated as affording some of the richest

pasturage in England. Near this spot is Combwich, where vessels of large size discharge part of their cargoes before they are able to reach the port of Bridgwater. At Huntspill commences the sea wall—a most important erection, for the removal of any portion of it would subject tens of thousands of acres to the encroachment of the sea at every tide. All the wells and ponds would be filled with salt water, and the results would be most disastrous.

History informs us that in the year 845 Ealston, bishop of Sherbourne, routed the Danish army near the mouth of our river, and that another great battle was fought adjoining, near the river Brue, between the West Saxons and the Ancient Britons; and also that near the same place Edmund Ironsides gained a memorable victory over the Danes A.D. 1,000. The remains of the Danish camps are yet visible.

We now approach Burnham, where the waters of the river Brue, from Glastonbury and Brent join our hero, the "Parrett-cum-Tone," and the whole discharge themselves into that part of the Bristol channel called "Bridgwater Bay." But the current of their waters, when clear, may be traced for some miles after they enter the sea, which at Burnham is generally muddy and far from clear. We must not forget to mention Highbridge, which is a rising port and the terminus of the railway from East Somerset and Wilts and Dorset. The dues received at Highbridge are, we understand, payable to the Corporation of Bridgwater. Burnham aspires also to the dignity of a port, and possesses a new pier, where steamers arrive from, and leave for, the Welsh ports, on the opposite side of the channel.

To enable vessels to work their way up the "Parrett-cum-Tone," the Trinity-house Commissioners have erected two light-houses at Burnham.

And the great ships sail outwards and return,  
Bending and bowing o'er the billowy swells;  
And ever joyful, as they see them burn,  
They wave their silent welcomes and farewells.

There was an ancient light-house here, that was built by a native of old Burnham, and of which some curious tales are told.

And thus, having traced the course of "our river" from its source to its watery grave, in the words of the new world poet, we leave him to the care of Father Neptune.

River! that in silence windeth  
Through the meadows, bright and free,  
Till at length thy rest thou findeth  
In the bosom of the sea.

Thus have we taken our readers through four towns, and more than thirty parishes. We have passed several castles,

numerous mills—many strongholds and encampments—six battle-fields, five monasteries and priories. We can reckon up no less than seven railways adjoining the banks of "our river," and we have mentioned some of the great men who have passed their time near it.

We trust that we have shown that the Tone has not lived a useless life, but that health, wealth and commerce have been promoted by its progress, and, as a great poet aptly expresses it—

Thus from its deep recesses beaming  
Spring life, delight, and joy to bless;  
And billowy waves, and waters streaming,  
Their mighty Maker's hand confess.

It has been shown that during the middle ages boats were brought up the Tone, but could not pass the various mills; consequently their cargoes had to be transferred from one boat to another. A commission under the Great Seal was granted in the 13th year of the reign of Charles the First to give power to John Coventry to make the river navigable from Bridgwater to Taunton, and from thence to Bradford bridge; but it does not appear that much was done at that time.

In the year 1698 an Act of Parliament was obtained, and thirty conservators were appointed, with greater and more extended powers. Tolls were to be levied on all passing boats. But even at this time the navigation was far from complete; for in summer, from want of water, and in winter, from the ice and often the floods, all business was stopped, although £3,500 had been expended. So in 1707 another Act was applied for, to give the conservators still greater power. Subsequently improvements were made so that barges of above fifteen tons were enabled to pass the whole distance.

By this Act it was enacted that when the conservators had received such tolls as would repay the outlay and interest, the surplus should be expended in charitable uses in the town of Taunton; and considerable expense and trouble were the conservators frequently put to by the applications of various persons for an inquiry into these matters.

Several other Acts were passed, and very large sums expended—whether prudently or otherwise "deponent sayeth not;" but there seems no doubt that altogether more than £100,000 were laid out, and that the tolls amounted at one time to about £2,500 per year. Those good old days are passed, however; and nearly all we know about the conservators now is, that they yearly sail down the canal, and have been handsome subscribers to the Taunton Hospital.

There is one subject in connection with "our river" without which we feel our paper will not be complete—and that is, its fish. It is well known that fish, whether in

salt or in fresh water, are noted for their fecundity; and with a moderate amount of care or watching the Tone may yet again become an attraction to the lovers of the "gentle art," and a supply of good and wholesome food may be yielded to those who live near its banks.

A great variety of fish is to be found in its waters. The late celebrated and lamented naturalist, Mr. Baker, of Bridgwater, has given a detailed account of them in the Proceedings of the Somerset Natural History Society.

I have given you lands to hunt in,  
I have given you streams to fish in,  
Filled the marshes full of wild fowl,  
Filled the river full of fishes.

*The Song of Hiawatha.*

Salmon are occasionally to be met with near Taunton, and many have been taken in the lower parts of the stream by baskets and other methods. Trout are sometimes of large size, and perch, carp, tench, roach and dace are very common. Gudgeon and the "little flounder" are occasionally caught; and eels of large size are to be met with in the locks and ether deep or muddy parts. After a storm, when the waters are turbid, the eel sieves are set and often yield a rich harvest. A quantity of "craw-fish" were placed in the river some years ago, but we are not able to report their fate. The greatest enemy to the fish is the poacher, and next to him the Pike or Jack, with which the Tone now abounds, and which destroy numerous small fish. They were formerly confined to the canal, but about ten years ago one of its banks broke away, when the canal waters and a large quantity of pike found their way into the Tone. Were it not for the care exercised by E. A. Sanford, Esq., of Nynhead, (who strictly preserves his ponds and waters,) fish would become exceedingly scarce.

We must not forget to mention other favourites of the river. The otter is seldom to be met with, as he prefers haunts where his food is more plentiful; but widgeon, coot, teal and snipe are often shot.

In the year 1868 Mr. Frank Buckland, the well-known "father of so many fish," lectured in Taunton on the before-named subjects, and elicited some passing interest. An association was formed, which erected a number of salmon-passes between Creech and Bradford, and hatched some hundreds of salmon fry, which were turned into the Tone. Hopes were sanguine that West Somerset would soon possess a fine salmon river; but, alas, for all things human! the society soon died a natural death. No watchers took care of the fish, and the pretty little salmon (whose birth created such a sensation), no doubt passed into the jaws of some hungry Jack or Pike. So now we have neither salmon fishing, inland navigation or boating.







# The Towns of West Somerset.

## Taunton.



ANY attempts have been made at various times to give an account of this town. In the year 1780 Mr. Locke, of Burnham, published proposals for its history. He collected many interesting particulars, but various causes prevented his completing his proposed work. Dr. Toulmin made use of Mr. Locke's papers, and published the first history in the year 1791. In 1821 James Savage, formerly librarian of the Taunton and Somerset Institution, issued his work, which contained all that had been previously published, and to which were added numerous other statements and particulars, including voluminous accounts of the siege and the proceedings during the Civil War and its consequences. Added to this were lengthy particulars of the elections; and, in order to make the book as large as possible, all the epitaphs in the various churches and chapels were given at full length. Nevertheless, this is at present our standard history, and will remain so, probably, for many years to come, until a "second Daniel" shall arise. In 1856 the Rev. Charles James Dyer published a prospectus for a new edition; but the Fates willed it otherwise. Soon after this Mrs. McMullan wrote a short treatise, containing principally particulars (gathered from Savage), in a conversational style. Between the years 1863 and 1867 the writer of these lines published in a Taunton paper, under the signature of "A Travelling Tauntonian," a series of articles on the town, embracing the greater part of its history, brought down to that time. In the year 1867 the Rev. Thomas Hugo (a Tauntonian), rector of West Hadkney, issued a

notice of a "History of the Town of Taunton from the Earliest Times to the Accession of Queen Elizabeth." Since that time several small pamphlets have appeared, published by the late Mr. F. R. Clarke, Mr. Goodman, and others. For the past three or four years the writer of these pages, under the signature of *Amator Patriæ*, has published in the *Somerset County Gazette* a number of articles on various local subjects and matters relating to West Somerset, in which occasional mention has been made of the town and borough of Taunton. Copying the example of the busy bee, who collects her honey from various flowers, we propose to give our readers some extracts from the numerous writers already mentioned and many others.

"Domesday Book" (compiled in the year 1086) thus speaks of the town:—"The Bishop of Winchester holds Taunton. Archbishop Stigand (then Bishop of Winchester) held it in the time of King Edward, and it paid the geld for fifty-four hides, and two yard-lands and a-half, of which there was arable land sufficient for one hundred ploughs. Besides this, the bishop has in demeene twenty carucates which never paid the geld, and thirteen ploughs. There are eighty villans, eighty-two bordars, seventy bondmen or slaves (*servi*), sixteen coliberti, and seventeen swineherds, who render seven pound ten shillings, and amongst them all they have sixty ploughs. There are sixty-four burgesses in Taunton, who pay thirty-two shillings, or sixpence each, to the Bishop of Winchester for his protection. There are three mills, which render ninety-five shillings. The market yields fifty shillings. There is a mint at Taunton which yields a profit of fifty shillings. There are forty acres of meadow, a common of pasture

two miles long and one mile broad, and a wood one mile in length, and the same in breadth. When Bishop Walchelin received this manor it paid fifty pounds; it now pays one hundred and forty-four pounds and thirteen pence, with all its appendages and customs. These are the customs of Taunton: Burgheristh, latrenes, hundred-pence, breach of the peace, heinfare, church-set, and St. Peter's pence; the tenants attend the bishop's courts three times in the year without being summoned, and go to the army with the bishop's men. The lands in the Manor of Taunton subject to these customs are Tolland, Oaks, Holford, Upper Cheddon, Lower (or South) Cheddon (now Cheddon Fitzpaine), Maidenbrook, Langford, Bishop's Hull, Heale, Ninehead, Norton (Fitzwarine), Bradford, Halse, Heathfield, Shapnoller (Soobindare), and Stoke; but the tenants of the two last are not liable to go to the army. The tenants of Bagborough are subject to the same customs, except attendance on the army and on funerals. The tenants of all these lands come to Taunton to swear fealty and to have justice administered; and when the lords of these lands die they are buried in Taunton. Bishop's Hull and Heale could not be separated from Taunton in the time of King Edward. Of the abovesaid fifty-four hides and a-half, and half a yard-land, Geoffrey now holds of the bishop four hides and one yard-land; Robert holds four hides and a-half; and Hugh two hides and a-half. There are in demesne ten ploughs and twelve bondmen (slaves), twenty villans, and twenty-eight bordars or cottagers, with ten ploughs. There are thirty-seven acres of meadow, and forty-three acres of woodland, and a mill which belongs to the said Hugh, of the value of three shillings. The value of these lands altogether is twenty-seven pounds. Of the aforesaid hides, Godwin holds under the bishop two, wanting half a yard-land; Leveva holds two hides; Alward holds one, and one yard-land and a-half; Aluric and Edmer hold three hides; and Lewi half a yard-land. There are in demesne seven ploughs and thirteen bondmen (slaves), thirteen villans, and twenty bordars, with three ploughs and a half. There are two mills, which yield yearly six shillings and eight-pence. There are forty-five acres of meadow, and sixty-one acres of woodland. The value of these lands altogether is eight pounds three shillings. The tenants who held these lands in the time of King Edward could not be separated from the church of Winchester. Of the abovesaid hides the Earl of Moreton holds one; Alured one; John two and half a yard-land. There are in demesne two ploughs and six bondmen, twelve villans, and seventeen bordars, with three ploughs and a half. There are two mills, which yield fourteen shillings and twopence, and nineteen acres of

meadow, and a hundred acres of pasture, and twenty acres of woodland. These three parcels of land belonged to Taunton in the time of King Edward, and were of the yearly value of seventy shillings; they now pay six pounds ten shillings. To the Manor of Taunton are added two hides and a-half in Lydeard St. Lawrence and Leigh (now Angersleigh), which a thane held in parage in the time of King Edward, and could choose for his patron or protector whatever lord he pleased. Ulward and Alward now hold these lands by a grant from King William. The arable is sufficient for five ploughs; there are six villans, three bordars, and four bondmen, and eleven acres of meadow, a hundred acres of pasture, and forty-nine acres of woodland. These lands were, and are still, worth forty-five shillings. The customs and services of these lands always belonged to Taunton, and King William granted them to the church of St. Peter of Winchester, and to Walchelin the bishop, as he himself testified in the presence of the Bishop of Durham, to whom he gave command to prepare a writ to that effect."

Dugdale, in the "Monasticon," says that in the year 721 Ethelard's Queen gave out of her patrimony the Manor of Taunton to the See of Winchester, where she was buried, to which Ethelard himself added seven manes or dwellings for peasants.

Ecton, in his "Thesaurus," mentioned particulars respecting Taunton.

Camden, in his "Britannia," thus speaks of Taunton:—"The Thone washes Taunton, and gives it its name. It is a neat town, delicately seated, and is, in short, one of the eyes of the county. Here Ina, King of the West Saxons, built a castle, which his wife Deesburgen levelled with the ground."

In the year 1668 "it gelded for sixty-four hides; had sixty-three burghers; and was held by the Bishop of Winchester, whose courts are here kept thrice a year. In 10th William III. an Act was passed for making the Thone navigable to Bridgwater. The country all around is beautiful with green meadows, and abounds in delightful gardens and orchards, which, with the thickness of the villages, charm the eye of a spectator."

Dr. Amory, writing in the year 1724, indulges in highly poetical and fanciful language, of which we shall give but a short extract:—

Hail! native town, with cheerful plenty blessed,  
Of numerous hands and thriving trade possess'd;  
Whose poor might live from biting want secure,  
Did not resistless ale their hearts allure.  
Round thee, in Spring, we view with ravish'd eyes  
Italian scenes in English ground arise;  
Which, crown'd with freedom, rival Paradise.  
Th' enamell'd meads with vast profusion show  
The various colours of the heavenly bow.

The remaining portions of this flowery epistle, are they not published at full length in the pages of the afore-said venerable Savage?

The Rev. Joseph Nightingale, in his "Beauties of England and Wales," published in 1815, thus speaks of the town:—"Taunton is a town, situated in the hundred of Taunton Deane. It was anciently called *Thouodunum*, or the town of the river Tone, by which it is watered. The number of its inhabitants was estimated at 5,794. The woollen manufacture flourished here soon after its first introduction into England by the memorable John Kemp, from Flanders. For many years, however, it has been on the decline, the silk trade occupying a great portion of the inhabitants. Taunton is an ancient borough by prescription; but its rights were confirmed by a charter at a very early period. In the reign of Charles II. it was deprived of its charter by that prince, on account of its adherence to the Parliament during the reign of his father. He restored its privileges, however, about seventeen years thereafter. It now consists of a mayor, a recorder, a justice of the peace, two aldermen, twenty-four capital burgesses, a town clerk, two constables, two portreeves, and two serjeants-at-mace. Besides these magistrates there are six gentlemen, justices of the peace at large, with powers to act within the borough. The mayor and aldermen are elected annually from among the burgesses. It is a curious fact that the officers of the borough have no power to arrest. Indeed there is no prison in this town of any description, except a Bridewell for vagrants. All debtors and criminals are sent to the gaols at Wilton and Ilchester. This corporation, though the town is extremely flourishing, is the meanest, perhaps, in England. It has neither lands, houses, nor joint-stock of money, the last charter precluding them from any such possessions. Taunton sends two members to Parliament, who are elected by such of the inhabitants residing within the borough as are potwallers and do not receive alms or charity. Their number is reckoned to be about five hundred. The legal returning-officers of this borough are the bailiffs, elected at the annual Court Leet, as was decided by a committee of the House of Commons on the 3rd day of May, 1803. The town of Taunton has ever been regarded as one of the principal in the county. Even before the modern improvements it was considered well built. Its streets are wide and airy, extending over a considerable portion of the ground. The houses have, for the most part, small gardens in front, which add much to their beauty and healthiness, as well as the convenience of the inhabitants. The country around Taunton is the most delightful imaginable. The fertility of its soil and the temperature of its climate are greatly boasted of by

the peasantry—indeed so much so that it is become proverbial to say, 'Where should I be born else but in Taunton Deane?'—that is, the Vale of Taunton. Taunton is undoubtedly a town of great antiquity. In the year 1666 two large earthen pitchers, full of Roman coins, were found in a ploughed field in this neighbourhood, supposed to have been buried there when that people were compelled to relinquish their conquests in Britain. Some years previous to that date there were also found a number of Roman coins and other antiquities in the foundations of an old house which stood near the castle. Within these last eighty years another Roman piece was discovered, when pulling down a house in the parish of St. James. It was of the size of a farthing, having the head of Vespasian upon one side, with this inscription—VESP. AUG. IMP. On the other was a female captive, having her hands bound behind her to a palm-tree. The legend was JUDEA CAPTA, and, in the exergue, S. C. These circumstances have led several antiquaries to suppose this town to have been a Roman station. But whatever may have been the condition of Taunton in those very early periods, it is certain that it was a place of great note in the time of the Saxons. Ina, king of the West Saxons, so famous for his religious zeal and munificence, built a castle here, so early as the year 700, and made it, for some time at least, the place of his residence. Here, it is said, he held the first great council of his kingdom; and here was framed, by their assistance, that code of laws which gave him so great reputation as a legislator. This castle was destroyed in the year 722 by his queen Ethelburga, who prevailed on him to resign his crown to her brother Ethelard, and retire to a monastery at Rome, where he died. The queen also renounced the world, and became a nun in the abbey of Barking, of which she was soon after elected abbess, and continued in that situation till her death. The castle remained in its demolished condition till the conquest, when it was rebuilt by one of the Bishops of Winchester, to which See the property of the Manor of Taunton had been annexed, according to Dugdale, by Fritheswitha, or Frithogotha, the wife of Ethelard, but, as others assert, by Emma, queen of Ethelred II. This castle afterwards underwent many alterations and repairs by the succeeding Bishops of Winchester. It is now converted to various uses."

Savage thus describes Taunton in 1822:—"The town stands on the great road leading from the Land's End in Cornwall to the North of England, lying between Exeter and Bridgwater, thirty-three miles North-East of the former, and eleven miles South of the latter. The situation rendering it the thoroughfare from Bristol and Bath to Exeter and Plymouth, it is enlivened with a continual

succession of travellers passing through it on pleasure or business, as this road is often preferred, on that account, to the more Southern one from London to the West. Its distance from London through Salisbury is one hundred and forty-six miles West by South, and through Bath one hundred and fifty-five miles. Longitude  $3^{\circ} 15' W.$  and latitude  $51^{\circ} 6' N.$  Taunton has ever been a principal town in the county of Somerset. Before the modern improvements were introduced it was deemed well built. Its streets are spacious, and, as it spreads over a considerable extent of ground, the houses, even in the middle of it, are generally furnished with good outlets and gardens, which contribute much to the pleasantness and salubrity of the town, as well as to the convenience of its inhabitants. It is a mile long from East to West, and its streets have a gradual descent to the river. It stands in a fertile and extensive vale. The country all around it is beautified with green meadows; abounds in delightful orchards and gardens; is enriched with wood, and peopled with numerous villagers, so as to exhibit to the eye of the spectator who approaches the town a charming scene. The county itself, though in the Winter moist and marshy, is supposed by some to derive its name from the Summer-like temperature of the air. The part of it in which Taunton is situated has, if not an exclusive, yet a peculiar claim to the excellent qualities which are ascribed to the whole. On account of its fertility the peasantry used to boast that it was so fruitful with the 'sun' and 'soil' alone as to need no manuring."

In the "Somersetshire Directory," published in 1840, Taunton is thus described:—"Taunton is a large and flourishing market town, situate in the centre of the valley of Taunton Deane, so celebrated for its fertility, and on the banks of the river Tone, from which it takes its name. It consists of three main streets, meeting in the centre of the town, where there is a fine open area, called the Parade, besides a great number of smaller streets. Its length from gate to gate is about a mile. The streets are very broad, well paved and watered, and lighted with gas. The Crescent is a fine row of buildings, fronted by a park-like enclosure. Mount-terrace is pleasantly situated. Of late years almost a new town has arisen in Holway-lane, now called South-street; and building is rapidly advancing in a site lately devoted to the purpose, and called Castle-street. The public buildings are numerous. The first that meets the eye on entering by the Eastern road is the Hospital, an ungainly structure, which is about to be rebuilt, if funds can be found for the purpose. Turning up South-street, we see on the left the new church, to be dedicated to the Holy Trinity, which promises to be a tasteful structure. Beyond this is the Union

Workhouse, a plain but substantial building. In Silver-street we come first to the Theatre, a shabby-looking place outside, but within fitted up in a very graceful and comfortable style, and having an excellent company on the stage, though, we regret to say, generally a very thin one in the other parts of the house. Beyond this, on the same side of the way, is the Baptist Chapel, a plain and commodious building. On the other side, beyond the turnpike-gate, is the Convent, with spacious grounds, and enclosed by lofty walls; it is a large brick structure, without any decoration. Returning, and strolling down East-street, the first striking object that meets the eye is the range of lofty buildings called Cheapside, a comparatively modern erection. Immediately after this the Parade, with the Market-house, is visible. This latter building is of brick, with an arcade on either side, without a single beauty to recommend it; and, to make it yet more ugly, a clock is mounted upon it, set in a wall of freestone. It is much to be desired that the whole of this building should be removed, and the entire area thrown open: this would be the greatest improvement of which the town is capable. On the left of the Parade is seen the new Market-house, an elegant structure, containing a fine room, used as a public reading-room, library, and museum; behind it is the market, very spacious and convenient—a singularly light and cheerful-looking structure, from which we pass into the fish-market, the exterior of which is too good for its situation and its purpose. On the right is Hammet-street, so called from the munificent patron of the town by whom it was erected, Sir B. Hammett. It opens a fine view of the tower of the church of St. Mary Magdalene, a specimen of architecture which has few rivals in the kingdom. It contains thirteen windows, richly ornamented; its height, exclusive of the pinnacles, is 131 feet; the pinnacles are 32 feet, and exquisitely light and graceful, being covered with carved work, and crowned with battlements. The church is spacious, containing a chancel, nave, and five aisles; the centre roof was formerly richly carved and gilt, and has been lately partially restored. The centre building is in the decorated style of English architecture. Passing down North-street, and turning to the right, we come to the church of St. James, a plain and ancient building, with a quadrangular tower. It has been recently enlarged. Near it was the conventual church of the priory. Returning thence, we see a stone bridge of three arches, crossing the Tone. That portion of the town which lies on the other side of the river is called North Town, and the tradition is that it was anciently a place of great size and importance, and formed a separate town, having its own markets, officers, &c.; a fair is still held

there for two days in every year. Turning again through North-street and into Castle Green, a conspicuous object is the Castle; it is part of a magnificent edifice, built in 1577, by William Giffard, Bishop of Winchester. Of the ancient fortress, so celebrated in history, but few relics remain. The ruins were, about forty years ago, converted into a dwelling-house. The Assize Hall was built by Bishop How, in 1577, since which time it has been frequently repaired and remodelled. The arch leading into Castle Green is perfect, and a fine specimen of ancient architecture. The neighbourhood is supposed to be traversed by underground passages from the Castle, which, however, if they exist at all, have been bricked up, for we have endeavoured in vain to explore them. On the other side of the Green is the College School, an ancient building. Taunton is a very old town, and has obtained considerable celebrity in history. Ina, King of the West Saxons, built a castle about the year 700, and held his first great council here. It was in the following reign that the town and manor were granted to the Bishops of Winchester. In the reign of William the Conqueror another castle was built on the site of the first, which had been destroyed; and in this reign the town had a mint, and enjoyed the privileges attached to the possession of that honour. In 1497 the impostor, Perkin Warbeck, seized the castle, but afterwards abandoned it. Taunton took an active part in the great struggle for liberty against the tyrant Stuart. In 1645 the castle sustained a long siege under Col. Blake (afterwards the celebrated Admiral), who held it for the Parliament against ten thousand troops, until it was relieved by Fairfax. At the restoration, in revenge for their zeal in the cause of civil and religious liberty, the inhabitants were deprived of their charter, and the walls of the town were razed to the ground, so that no trace of them now remains. Taunton next appears in the history as prominent in Monmouth's rebellion, and the rebel was first proclaimed King in its streets. But for this it paid a terrible penalty. In the suppression of the rebellion the monster Jeffries was despatched to glut the royal vengeance under the form of law, and a vast number of its inhabitants fell victims to the rage of the tyrant and his bloody judge. This town was once noted for its woollen manufactories; but that trade has long since departed, and that of silk has taken its place, upon which material there are several manufactories engaged, and it forms a considerable portion of the support of the population. There are also a lace manufactory, and several iron and brass foundries, and one extensive general hardware establishment, known by the name of Tangier Manufactory, from its site."

Murray, in his "Hand Book for Somersetshire," says:—

"Taunton is seated on a rising ground above the river Tone, from which it derives its name, and in a rich and picturesque country, its famous vale of Taunton Dean being bounded by the wild ranges of the Quantock and Blackdown hills. It is the county town of W. Somerset, and has long been celebrated for its healthy position, sunny aspect, broad streets, old-fashioned respectable houses, and beautiful parish church. It is a town of considerable antiquity. The coins which have been found in it sanction that it was a Roman station; but there is no doubt that in Saxon times it was a place of importance, in which Ina built a castle and drew up his code of laws. At the present day its chief points of interest are its church and the remains of this castle."

A modern poet (Draper) thus sings of the town:—

"Fair town! of old for love of freedom fam'd,  
When civil strife, blood-stained, bestrode the land—  
By famine, fire, and slaughter still untamed—  
Foremost among the brave, thy patriot band  
Stood like some bold rock on a stormy strand:  
For midst them moved a master-spirit—He  
Whose flag, in after days, the breezes fanned,  
For England's glory, over every sea;  
Until the world outrang with Blake and Victory!"

"Kelly's Post Office Directory" states that—"Taunton is a parliamentary borough, market, county, and assize town, and railway station, in the hundred of Taunton and Taunton Dean, union of its own name, and Western division of Somersetshire, deanery and archdeaconry of Taunton, and diocese of Bath and Wells, distant by railway 163½ miles West-by-South from London; 44½ South-West from Bristol; 30½ North-East from Exeter; 51½ South-West from Bath; 7½ East-North-East from Wellington, and 11 South-by-West from Bridgwater; containing in 1861 15,538 inhabitants, viz., St. Mary Magdalene parish 8,902; St. James's parish 5,244; Wilton parish 909; part of Bishop's Hull 769; and one house in West Monkton 14; of which the parliamentary borough contains 14,660. It is situated on the river Tone, which was navigable by means of locks to the town, but ceased to be so used after the Taunton and Bridgwater canal was opened. The conservators of the river Tone have power to restore the navigation of the river whenever the canal shall cease to be navigable. The Bristol and Exeter Railway passes through St. James's parish, and there is a station at the Northern entrance to the town. This place is of great antiquity, and was called by the Saxons Tantun, and subsequently Tawnton, and Thoneton, from its situation on the river Thone, or Tone, and there is every reason to believe that it existed in the time of the Romans, from the discovery in the neighbourhood of several urns containing Roman coins. Ina, King of the West Saxons, built a castle here, for a royal residence, about the year 700, in which he held

his first great council. This castle was afterwards razed to the ground by Ethelburga, his queen, after expelling Eadbricht, King of the South Saxons, who had seized it. It is supposed that in the following reign the town and manor were granted to the church of Winchester, and another castle built on the site of the first by the Bishops of Winchester, in the reign of William the Conqueror, in which, for many years, they principally resided. In this reign Taunton had a mint, and enjoyed the privileges attached to the possession of that honour; some of the coins bearing the effigy of the Conqueror are still in existence. In 1497, during the reign of Henry VII., the impostor, Perkin Warbeck, seized the town and castle, which he quickly abandoned on the approach of the King's troops. In 1645 it again became the scene of civil war, being celebrated for the long siege it sustained under Colonel Blake (afterwards the renowned Admiral), who held it for the Parliament against ten thousand troops under Lord Goring, until it was relieved by Fairfax. At the Restoration, the inhabitants having incurred the displeasure of the King for their zeal in the cause of civil and religious liberty, were deprived of their charter, and the walls of the town were razed to the ground, so effectually that even their site is not known. The inhabitants of Taunton appear to have taken a prominent part in the rebellion of Monmouth, and proclaimed him King in their streets. The town is situated in a central part of the beautiful and luxuriant vale of Taunton Dean, and consists of three main streets, meeting in the centre of the town, where there is a fine open triangular space, called the Parade, enclosed with iron posts and chains, besides many smaller streets. It is upwards of a mile in length. The principal streets are spacious, well paved, and lighted with gas; the houses, chiefly built of brick, are generally commodious and handsome, and well supplied with excellent water. Hammet-street forms a handsome approach to the church of St. Mary. A substantial stone bridge of three arches crosses the Tone, and connects the town proper with that portion called North Town."

The late Mr. F. R. Clarke lately published a Taunton Directory, which contains some interesting information respecting the town, written in his well-known pleasant style, and from which we select the following:—"Taunton, the county town of Somersetshire, is situated in the most fertile part of a tract of land known as the 'Vale of Taunton Deane.' It is a good market town, and an ancient Parliamentary borough, 163 miles South-West by West of London, lying a little way South of the Taunton station on the Bristol and Exeter line of railway. Coming from the station towards the town, the traveller will observe a fine range of hills against the Southern sky. These con-

stitute the Blackdown range, on one of which, above the town of Wellington, seven miles from Taunton, stands a monument, a triangular obelisk, erected in the year 1816 in honour of the great Duke of Wellington. The river Tone is not now navigable, except for about half a mile below the bridge; and the traffic to and fro is barely sufficient to keep down the growth of water-weeds, which in some places impede the path of the rowers, row they never so deftly. The river itself is, or is said to be, under the guardianship of certain commissioners called Conservators, who admirably fulfil the purpose for which they are appointed by going to Bridgwater once a-year by canal. It would be difficult to say who is the presiding authority here. There are magistrates who sit twice a week, squires of the town and neighbourhood, who hear and adjudge cases; there is the Local Board of Health, which erects gas lamps, paves our streets, waters them, lights them, and levies no end of rates; and there is a body of Market Trustees, which has laid out the markets, built the Market-house, and levies tolls on marketable commodities within certain limits and restrictions. They also gave us the Parade; for a hundred years ago the site was thickly covered with a lot of low houses. There is no mayor and corporation now. Charles I. granted the town a charter, which was revoked by his son, on account of the town taking a view of things adversely to the royal cause; but Charles II. subsequently revoked his revocation, and re-granted the charter. This continued until George III.'s time, when the people, like the frogs in the fable, wearied of King Leg or King Stork, I know not which, forfeited their charter by neglecting to fill up in time the requisite number for the corporation. Anterior to the charter, if public meetings were in vogue at that time, (and how can we say they were not?) I presume the Constables or the Bailiffs presided, as the latter do now. Samuel Daniel, poet laureate in Queen Elizabeth's day, was a Taunton man. He was also groom of the chamber to Annie of Denmark, queen of James I., as Montaigne, the essayist, had been to Henri III. of France. Daniel commends this prince of essayists highly in a poetical epistle to his 'deare brother and friend, M. John Florio,' the first translator into English of Montaigne's 'Moral, Political, and Military Discourses.' Camden, in his 'Remains,' speaks highly of Daniel; calls him in one place (Chap. I.) 'our Lucan;' and in another classes him with the most pregnant wits of the time, whom succeeding ages may justly admire, with Drayton, Spenser, Ben Jonson, and last, but hardly least, Mr. William Shakspeare. Mr. Kinglake, the author of 'Eöthen,' a most sprightly, fascinating book, and of a 'History of the Invasion of the Crimea,' is also a Taunton man. Henry Norris was the author of some alight



fugitive pieces; and Lee, the player and playwright, and manager also of the Taunton theatre for some years, wrote 'Caleb Quotem,' a capital farce in its time. The celebrated Cranmer was Archdeacon of Taunton in 1522, the year that Bishop Fox founded the Grammar School; but it does not follow that he lived here. John Locke, the philosopher, wrote a little treatise on Education at Chipley, near Wellington, the seat at that time, and long since, of the Clarkes, and dedicated it to his friend and host, Edward Clarke, M.P. for Taunton, and colleague in the House of Commons with Mr. Hugh Speke in the reign of William and Mary. Leigh Hunt wrote his 'Story of Rimini' at old Mr. Marriott's house in East-street, and the poet Coleridge once preached at Mary-street Chapel, a little while before he enlisted in the Dragoons. Theodore Hook lived here a good deal when a young man; and Sydney Smith, one of the projectors of the *Edinburgh Review*, cultivated literature on something better than 'oatmeal' at the rectory of Combe Florey; while Andrew Crosse, the famous electrician, lived hard by at Broomfield. Not a very great way off, viz., at Ilchester, lived Roger Bacon, the renowned natural philosopher of the middle ages. Mr. Serjeant Cox, who contested the borough at the 1868 election, is editor of many works and publications political, legal and otherwise, all of which betoken considerable ability and acumen. Walter Harte, vicar of St. Mary's in 1683, who, being a Nonjuror, lost his fellowship and other preferments, had a son, who wrote a 'History of Gustavus Adolphus,' the 'lion of the North and bulwark of Protestant faith,' as Dugald Dalgetty styles him in Scott's charming 'Legend of Montrose.' But I know not whether the son of this 'Hart royal' ever lived in Taunton, though there is a probability in favour of it. Dr. Toulmin, a Unitarian minister, wrote a 'History of Taunton,' the first ever published. The vicar of St. Mary's, the Rev. Prebendary Clark, is well known as the author of several theological works, and is justly admired both for his literary ability and his eloquence; while another vicar, that of Hillfarrance, the Rev. J. King Eagles, is a writer of considerable brilliancy, and a man of good classical reputation. If his sermons are at all equal to his letters, which are gems of wit and happy illustration, he must be another Dr. South. The celebrated Rowland Hill was vicar of Kingston in 1773. Mr. Warre, the late vicar of Bishop's Lydeard, was also a learned archaeologist; and so is the Rev. T. Hugo, who was born in Taunton. The railway station is on the main line of the Bristol and Exeter Railway, and there are branch lines to Yeovil, to Chard, to Watchet, and to Wells. The first opens up ready access to the interesting Wiltshire country, the second to the South coast, the third to the health-inspiring breezes of the Bristol Channel and the

Atlantic Ocean, and the fourth to Wells. Excursionists to Watchet can go and return for eighteenpence in the Summer; and it is a great boon, the being taken down to sea so cheaply, from whence easy access may be had to the beloved Quantocks, and a pleasant tramp over Staple, Thorncombe, and Crowcombe hills and Willenseck, back to Taunton. Besides the railway accommodation, there is every facility for turnpike travellers, pedestrians, and velocipedestrians; for the roads are good and wide, and there are pleasant fields for a ramble or half an hour's contemplation whenever you feel disposed and can get away for thirty minutes from yourself and your surroundings. Cotlake-hill, half a mile; Orchard Woods,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  m.; Stoke Woods, 3 m.; Pickeridge-hill,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  m.; Castle Neroche, a fine old British encampment, 7 m.; the Blackdown-hills, 6 m.; Hestercombe Woods,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  m. The villages around are numerous and very pretty: Staplegrove,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  m.; Bishop's Hull,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  m.; Nerton,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  m.; Stoke,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  m.; Corfe, 3 m.; Pitminster,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  m.; Kingston, 3 m.; Cheddon,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  m.; Creech, 3 m.; Ruishton, 2 m.; Monkton, 4 m.; Bishop's Lydeard, 5 m. The Somerset Fox Hounds, under Mr. G. Luttrell, meet three times a week in the season, generally at moderate distances from the town; the Taunton Vale Harriers meet several times a week; and the Staghounds, under Mr. Bissett, wake the red deer from their lair on the Quantock and Brendon Hills. There is not much game in the immediate neighbourhood, and the lands are jealously preserved; but there are trout in the river Tone and Norton brook for patient Waltonians, and there are promises of salmon in the Tone. Cricketers will find wickets in the archery ground on the Bishop's Hull road; and swimmers have a suitable bathing-place provided for them in French Weir Fields. The canal used to afford tolerably good ice for skaters, which was well nigh the only use it had been put to for some years; but that small measure of utility is denied to it now that the waters are dried up by the Railway Company. The town is pre-eminent for schools both in quality and number, not for boys only, but for girls as well. There is not a town like it in the West of England, I am informed; and, as Ireland used to be designated the Island of the Saints, Taunton may be known as the Town of Schools. Dr. Toulmin published a very valuable history of the town nearly eighty years ago; Mr. James Savage, a painstaking conscientious man, republished it with additions of his own in 1822. That is now nearly fifty years ago; but I understand the Rev. Thomas Hugo, a mediæval scholar and learned antiquarian, intends some day to give the world the benefit of his researches among the archives of Winchester. Meanwhile Mr. Jeboult has from time to time amassed an immense quantity of information respecting the past events in his native

town, which he has published from time to time in the *Somerset County Gazette*, and which he is now editing afresh, with a view to their publication in a more compact form."

From these papers of a "Travelling Tauntonian," published in 1886, we extract the following:—"Taunton, the county town of Somerset, is situated on the river Tone, which, rising on the Brandon-hills, about 15 miles to the West, waters the lovely Vale of Taunton Deane, joins the Parrett near Athelney, and falls into Bridgwater Bay on the Bristol Channel. The neighbourhood is noted for the fertility of the land, the beauty of the scenery, and the healthiness of the climate. Taunton is a place of considerable antiquity. For a period of more than eleven hundred and fifty years it has maintained its position as one of the chief towns of the West. If the Romans, when they occupied this country, had not a station here, they certainly had in the immediate neighbourhood, while their roads ran through the vale. During the time of the Saxon Heptarchy King Ina here erected his palace and seat of justice, and enacted many great and good laws. The money coined at the Taunton Mint was in general use at that period. In later and more troublesome times, when the Danes overran this country, the great King Alfred found a safe retreat on the banks of the Tone, and probably it was here that he translated the Psalms, and pondered and prepared those good laws which afterwards made England great. For protection and mutual benefit the maner about this time was annexed to the see of Winchester, and the connection has ever since existed. At the Norman Conquest Taunton was a small but important and thriving town, and some interesting particulars of it are recorded in Domesday Book. During the twelfth and thirteenth century we find occasional mention made of the town. It duly paid the annual Peter's pence to the Pope, and possessed a name for the loyalty and independence of its inhabitants. It has returned two members to Parliament ever since the first assembling of the great council of the nation. When Perkin Warbeck aspired to the throne, his adherents were here dispersed by the King, and some fighting in and about the Castle took place. During the middle ages it was a closely-built, flourishing, populous town, with a considerable trade, especially in woollen goods. It contained a noble priory, a small monastery, and many churches and episcopal chapels, some of which have been destroyed for centuries. There was also a guildhall, an almshouse, a leper house, besides several other secular buildings. At the time of the civil wars, in 1645, Taunton sided with the Parliament, was twice besieged, and made a most extraordinary defence (under the renowned General Blake), which was the admiration of all England. It was

here that the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, was so warmly received and proclaimed king. In this neighbourhood was fought the decisive battle of Sedgemoor, which was soon followed by the trials and executions of the rebels by the noted Judge Jeffries, at the awful 'bloody assize.' The town formerly possessed a mayor and corporation, and was walled and fortified; but in consequence of the foregoing occurrences the King deprived it of its charter, and levelled its walls to the ground. After some time the charter was renewed, and was again lost in consequence of the internal dissension of the members of the corporation. About this time Taunton became a stronghold of Dissent, and the fame of its Independent and other Dissenting congregations became considerable. After the decline of the woollen trade, the manufacture of silk goods was extensively carried on. A large general trade was done in Taunton, in consequence of the capital water-carriage of the river Tone, on which large sums of money had been spent. About fifty years ago great improvements were made in this town; it was provided with an excellent market, its streets were widened and improved, and it became a favourite Winter residence. Nor has the march of improvement ceased; for few towns are better provided with gas, water, drainage, and other advantages than Taunton. It now proudly stands (according to the return of the Registrar-General) the first locality in England for health; consequently the houses and neighbouring villas are let as soon as erected. Taunton at the present time is noted principally for the excellence and extent of its educational establishments. Besides numerous flourishing private schools, the Independents and Wesleyans have each a large college, and the Taunton Church of England Grammar School bids fair to become celebrated throughout the West. Taunton is governed by two bailiffs, annually elected at the court leet. The county magistrates meet twice a week to dispense justice, and the general management of the town is vested in the Board of Health. The town will shortly be well supplied with railway accommodation, and have direct lines to Bristol, Exeter, Yeovil, Watchet, Chard and Barnstaple. Its markets are celebrated; its shops are equal to any of similar towns; it possesses the various county establishments; the Taunton and Somerset Hospital; the Somersetshire Archaeological Museum, the Taunton Reading-Rooms, besides the Castle, Barracks, Union Workhouse, Gymnasium, School of Art, Banks, Post-office, &c., &c., not forgetting the beautiful Shire Hall, lately erected at the Western end. Its churches and towers are noted throughout the country for their elegance and beauty; the chapels are numerous and commodious; the walks and drives in the neighbourhood are very beautiful; packs of

fox-hounds, harriers, and stag-hounds hunt the adjoining country; and some good fishing and shooting may be had near; so that, in short, Taunton possesses all the qualifications to entitle it to rank among the first of English towns, and to persons who are seeking a pleasant and healthy residence it offers advantages seldom to be met with."

The changes and improvements made in the town during the past generation have been great and numerous, and may be thus noticed:—"Thirty years ago no railway-whistle had yet pierced the stillness of the Vale of Taunton Deane, and the old mail and stage-coaches ran in all their glory, while the guard's horn enlivened the dull streets. The great stage-vans, and their six or eight horses, with musical bells, supplied the town with light goods: the heavy were brought on the river Tone or the canals. Taunton claimed to be well watched, lighted and drained; but these benefits were confined to four or five of the principal streets; all the other parts of the borough were left to take care of themselves. Now every part has received attention, and Taunton is justly proud of its high position for health amongst all the towns of the kingdom. Although we have not yet derived the advantage or disadvantage of a Mayor and Corporation, still, perhaps, we are as well off in the matter of town government as the majority of similar places; and we may take credit for a very ancient and almost unique form of local government, besides deriving all the advantages from the introduction of the Public Health and similar Acts. As regards amusements, it is true we have lost our theatre and races; but we have gained our annual Flower Show, Archaeological Society's meetings, and numerous exhibitions, concerts, lectures—far more improving than, and less liable to the objections of, the former. The silk trade, which in 1825 gave employment to 2,000 looms and 5,000 hands, is now but partially worked; but other industries have been introduced, and employment is generally found for our working population. Our public buildings have not been overlooked. The old churches have been restored, and several handsome new ones erected. St. Mary's tower, the pride and glory of our town, has, like the Phoenix, risen from its ashes—alas! to weep over the ruins of its elder neighbour. Surely it is time that St. James's parish wiped off this standing disgrace. New chapels have been built, and the old ones have generally shaken off the eighteenth-century idea that anything was good enough for God's house. Enlarged school-rooms have been added, and many additional services held. The Hospital, Gaol, and Union Workhouse have been improved and enlarged, new and handsome Courts of Justice erected, and Taunton has become the county town. During the last thirty years railways have been introduced, fresh lines opened in

all directions, and a new and enlarged railway-station erected. Rival telegraph companies flash our messages to all parts of the world. Our post-office has been enlarged, and a savings' bank and money-order office added. Then, as regards education, surely in this department we have not only kept our ground, but gone beyond our neighbours; and we may fairly challenge any similar town to show such new and handsome colleges and such numerous schools as we possess, not for one class or denomination only, but for all. To improve public taste, we have the School of Art established. We must not forget our newspapers, which have increased fourfold, the *Somerset County Gazette* having about thirty years ago commenced its useful career. Our population has increased about 20 per cent. New streets, neighbourhoods, and districts have sprung up, and are well lighted, watered, and drained. Many excellent and well-stocked shops have been opened. Pretty villas have grown up all around us, and found occupants as fast as they have been erected. An abundance of pure water has been laid on throughout the borough, and is within the reach of all. Our gas-lights have been extended to the most distant parts of the borough, and the price of gas has been reduced from 12s. 6d. per 1,000 feet to 4s. 6d. Nor must we forget the improvements and additions effected in our banks, which are now among our most important public buildings. Our markets are well supplied with all necessaries, and the revenues have increased 20 per cent. New and large public Assembly-rooms have been added to our town, and our old ones improved. Handsome almshouses have been erected for the use of the poor and infirm, and a most picturesque cemetery provided for the dead. Our feoffees of charities are becoming a rich and important body, and in a few years will exert a powerful influence on our town. With regard to military affairs, we have not been behind-hand. Our Yeomanry have been continued, the Militia embodied and quartered at Taunton, the Rifle Volunteers established, and the Pensioners enrolled. A brief review like the present cannot be expected to embrace all that has been done. We merely point to the principal changes that have taken place within the last thirty years. We might have included other matters, as the construction of the new Corn Exchange, the establishment of a bathing-place, gymnasium, cricket, archery, and gun clubs, besides mutual improvement, debating, and book societies. We might also include the establishment of the Oxford Examinations, and the excellent museum of the Archaeological Society, which contains many valuable and unique articles; or we might touch on the superiority of the new police over the old parish constables. These and many other improvements have taken place within the last thirty

years. In looking back we think that Taunton men will agree with us that we have nothing to be ashamed of, but, on the contrary, much of which to be proud. The last generation has certainly not been idle. Let Tauntonians of the present day have a good heart and take courage, for much still remains to be done to keep pace with the times, and with our rivals around us. To ensure prosperity for the future, our town wants some permanent staple manufacturing trade, to find employment for all the working classes, and requires some still greater inducements to the higher classes to come and settle amongst us. We have already many; the new colleges will add more. Nature has done a great deal in surrounding Taunton with most beautiful scenery and walks. A handsome, well-watered park, in which all kinds of out-door amusements could be enjoyed at suitable seasons, and a spacious concert-room, with a regular band, &c., would, no doubt, do something towards this desideratum, and would, perhaps, remove the complaint we have often heard, that 'Taunton is a very nice town, but dull to reside in.'

We have before us a very large collection of matters and subjects connected with the town of Taunton, brought down to the present time, a considerable portion of which has never yet appeared in print; but we feel that the present work is hardly suitable for such details. We therefore propose to give but an outline in this treatise. At a future time we may probably publish a separate and full account of this town, or, what would be more satisfactory, hand over our collection of papers into the hands of some one who may have more time, opportunity, and talent. In the meanwhile we shall be happy to afford information on any local subjects.

Our papers embrace the principal events of the town as recorded in all published books, including reports and prospectuses of the various public bodies, accounts of all the elections of members of Parliament (since the publication of Savage's History of Taunton in 1821), particulars of the canals and railways, Post-office telegraphs, gas and water companies, banks, colleges, churches, and the various new societies and companies that have been formed within the past 30 years.

We now annex a list of the principal events connected with the borough of Taunton from the earliest ages to the present time, arranged in chronological order:—

Fourth Century. The Romans made a road and erected A.D. villas in this neighbourhood.

700 Ina, King of the West Saxons, built Taunton Castle.

702 A great national council held here.

721 Taunton Castle destroyed, and soon afterwards rebuilt.

721 Manor of Taunton annexed to the see of Winchester.

879 King Alfred concealed himself at Athelney, near this town.

883 Court Leet established.

980 Coins struck at Taunton.

1001 Taunton burnt by the Saxons; the castle greatly injured.

1020 Canute issued Taunton money.

1040 Archbishop Stigard held Taunton Manor.

1066 Population of Taunton 329; value of castle and manor £700 per annum.

1086 Walchelin, Bishop of Winchester, instituted the customs of the Manor of Taunton.

1090 Re-issue from Taunton mint.

1100 The Castle rebuilt, and the "Keep" erected.

1106 Archdeaconry of Taunton established.

1127 The Priory founded by William Gifford, Bishop of Winchester.

1140 Enlarged by Henry de Blois, brother of King Stephen.

1175 The first prior appointed.

1263 Stavondale Priory united to Taunton.

1269 The leper house built.

1277 The Church of St. Peter and Paul erected at Taunton Priory.

1280 The advowson granted to the Abbey of Glastonbury.

1280 St. Mary's Rectory paid 90 marks to the Pope.

1295 First election of members of Parliament for this borough.

1308 St. Mary's vicarage endowed, the vicar to provide a priest for the Castle and for Trull, Wilton, &c.

1322 The Carmelite Monastery founded.

1331 Great disturbances at Taunton Priory.

1336 The woollen trade established.

1395 St. Mary's tower supposed to have been built by William Wykham.

1399 Robert Bathe founded a chantry.

1439 Thos. Chaucer, son of the celebrated poet, constable of Taunton Castle.

1444 Revenues of Taunton Priory £150 a-year.

1449 The Castle besieged by the Earl of Devon.

1477 First Act of Parliament passed for improving Taunton streets.

1478 Site for the original Guildhall granted by William Waynfleet.

1495 Taunton Castle enlarged and repaired and porters' lodges built.

1497 Perkin Warbeck advanced to Taunton, met by King Henry VII., and taken prisoner.

- 1488 Porch of St. Mary's Church built.
- 1522 Thomas Cranmer, Archdeacon of Taunton, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.
- 1522 Free Grammar School established by Bishop Fox.
- 1535 Taunton Priory submitted to King Henry VIII.
- 1537 The last prior appointed.
- 1538 Suffragan Bishop of Taunton appointed.
- 1539 The Priory dissolved, and in
- 1550 Sold to Thomas More.
- 1553 Seven chantries in St. Mary's Church discontinued.
- 1554 Taunton College endowed.
- 1570 A stone bridge erected over the Tone.
- 1577 The Castle repaired and enlarged by Bishop Horne. Daniel (a Taunton man) Poet Laureate.
- 1591 Saunders's charity founded.
- 1591 Stringland's ditto.
- 1610 New Feoffement appointed.
- 1614 Trowbridge's charity founded.
- 1615 Huish's almshouses built.
- 1622 Farewell's charity established.
- 1627 First charter granted by Charles I.
- 1635 Grey's almshouses erected.
- 1637 Henley's ditto ditto.
- 1639 St. Mary's Communion plate presented by Grace Portman.
- 1643 Roman coins found near this town.
- 1645 Moggridge's charity founded.
- 1645 Taunton besieged.
- 1646 Alex. Hill gave £20 per year to the poor of St. Mary's parish.
- 1646 Baptist sect originated.
- 1647 Survey made of Bishop's lands.
- 1647 Manor of Taunton sold by order of Parliament.
- 1650 Town walls demolished, and the charter taken away.
- 1662 Tradesmen's tokens struck.
- 1666 Two urns discovered near Taunton full of Roman coins.
- 1667 Constables struck coins.
- 1672 Paul's Meeting built.
- 1673 Mary-street Chapel erected; first Act passed for improvement of the Tone.
- 1674 Geo. Newton appointed first minister of Paul's Meeting.
- 1675 Stage coaches started from Taunton; Joseph Alleyne died.
- 1677 Corporation charter renewed; Meredith's charity founded.
- 1683 Walter Marte ejected from St. Mary's Vicarage.
- 1685 Duke of Monmouth proclaimed king at Taunton; battle of Sedgmoor. Trial and execution by Jeffreys; the "Maids of Taunton" summoned.
- 1685 The church plate buried for safety.
- 1685 The Quakers' Chapel built.
- 1685 A proposal to turn Paul's Meeting into a work-house.
- 1689 Population of Taunton upwards of 20,000.
- 1694 Parker's charity established; Gadd's ditto; Reynold's ditto; Cornish's ditto; 30 conservators of Tone appointed.
- 1698 Navigation of river undertaken.
- 1704 8,500 persons in Taunton employed in the woollen trade, £1,500 weekly paid as wages. Mr. Trenchard, M.P. for Taunton, published the "Independent Whig."
- 1707 Second Act obtained for navigation of river.
- 1709 New organ erected in St. Mary's Church.
- 1710 Stacey's charity founded.
- 1711 Clock and chimes placed in St. Mary's tower.
- 1721 Mary-street Chapel re-erected.
- 1722 Calvinistic Baptists dissolved.
- 1722 Baptist Chapel erected in Tancred-street.
- 1724 Dr. Amory published poem on Taunton.
- 1725 The "Taunton Journal" established.
- 1729 Decree of the Court of Chancery issued respecting town lands and charities.
- 1732 The new Meeting-house built.
- 1746 Lackington born.
- 1748 More Roman coins discovered.
- 1752 First Turnpike Act passed.
- 1753 The Bridewell (near Tone bridge) destroyed.
- 1754 Wilton Gaol built.
- 1763 The Market-house Company formed.
- 1765 Second Act passed for improving the roads.
- 1766 A Reading Society established.
- 1768 Market-house Act obtained.
- 1767 The charter renewed, and Mayor and Corporation elected.
- 1772 Market-house erected.
- 1772 Buildings for a county hospital commenced at present convent.
- 1773 Rowland Hill vicar of Kingston.
- 1778 The silk trade established.
- 1778 Hammet-street built.
- 1778 Octagon Chapel erected by Wesley.
- 1779 The streets paved.
- 1780 Sir Benjamin Hammet returned M.P. for this borough.
- 1781 The silk trade extended—1,800 persons and 800 silk-looms employed.
- 1783 Old flags from the Taunton (33rd) Regiment, placed in St. Mary's Church.
- 1785 Sir B. Hammet repaired the Castle.

- 1786 E. J. Edaile appointed keeper of Taunton Castle.  
 1788 The first Sunday School opened in this town.  
 1789 The "Great Market" established.  
 1790 The first bank commenced in Taunton.  
 1791 Toulmin's History of Taunton published.  
 1792 The Corporation dissolved.  
 1793 The population of Taunton reduced to 5,472  
 1794 The "Taunton Herald" published.  
 1796 The barracks erected.  
 1797 The Masonic Lodge established. Sir. S. Hammet  
     fined £1,000 for refusing the office of Lord Mayor.  
 1798 The present Paul's Meeting built.  
 1800 The Taunton Bank opened by Messrs. Badcock.  
 1800 The Theatre built.  
 1801 Population 5,796.  
 1802 King Alfred's monument erected at Athelney.  
 1803 The unbalanced debt of the Tone Conservators  
     exceeded £100,000  
 1806 Wesleyan Methodist Chapel erected.  
 1807 The Convent occupied.  
 1807 The Crescent built.  
 1807 The "Taunton Courier" established.  
 1809 The Taunton and Somerset Hospital founded.  
 1810 Fruitless attempt to restore the Corporation.  
 1811 Population of the hundred of Taunton Deane,  
     9,212; number of houses 620.  
 1812 Tradesmen's tokens struck in Taunton.  
 1812 A new organ erected in St. James's Church.  
 1812 Collins returned M.P.  
 1812 Frederick Corfield gave the interest of £800 for  
     the establishment of an afternoon service at  
     St. James's.  
 1814 The present Friends' Meeting-house erected.  
 1815 The Baptist Chapel in Silver-street built.  
 1816 The gaol enlarged.  
 1816 Chapel in Tancred-street pulled down.  
 1816 The Assize Courts refitted; Wellington Monu-  
     ment built.  
 1817 Trustees of markets obtained their second Act of  
     Parliament.  
 1817 Savings' Bank opened.  
 1817 Taunton Eye Infirmary established.  
 1820 Duck's lunatic asylum founded.  
 1820 Baring and Warre returned for Taunton.  
 1821 The original Gas Company formed.  
 1821 The Roman Catholic Chapel built in Crescent.  
 1821 Savage's History of Taunton published.  
 1821 The new markets built.  
 1821 The toll of the river Tone amounted to £2,368  
     per year.  
 1821 Population of Taunton increased to 8,539.
- 1822 The Taunton and Somerset Institution and  
     Reading Rooms Company formed.  
 1824 St. Mary's Church repaired and the "Crown  
     gallery" removed.  
 1825 Racecourse made on Shoreditch-road.  
 1825 Taunton Agricultural Association formed.  
 1825 Ship canal proposed to connect Bristol and  
     English Channels and to pass near Taunton.  
 1825 The Taunton Grand Western Railroad Company  
     formed.  
 1825 The Bridgwater and Taunton Canal Company  
     established.  
 1826 Seven candidates at the general election.  
 1827 Grand Western Canal Company formed.  
 1828 The original Infant School built.  
 1829 Government ordered the disbandment of the West  
     Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry.  
 1830 Labouchere and Bainbridge first elected—Peasey  
     petitioned.  
 1831 New borough set out; population, 10,149.  
 1832 Large meetings held in Taunton respecting the  
     abolition of slavery.  
 1834 Branch canal through French Weir fields cut.  
 1834 North Town bridge built.  
 1835 Diaraeli offered himself for Taunton; the National  
     Schools in Church-square built.  
 1836 The Bristol and Exeter Railway Company obtained  
     their charter; St. James's Church enlarged;  
     "Somerset County Gazette" established.  
 1837 Grand celebration of the ascension to the throne  
     of Queen Victoria; Newton Lee offered for  
     Taunton.  
 1838 Taunton Union Workhouse erected; Registry  
     Hall built; Public Hall in Hunt's Court and the  
     "Rookery" in Tangier "run up."  
 1840 Local police established.  
 1841 Wilberforce and Hall offered for Taunton;  
     Colebrooke elected on Bainbridge's resignation;  
     Theatre closed; population, 12,066.  
 1842 "Somerset County Herald" published; Haine's-  
     hill laid out; Bristol and Exeter Railway  
     opened at Taunton; St. Mary's Church restored,  
     and history of the same published by Dr. Cottle;  
     Cattle Market formed.  
 1843 Wilton Gaol enlarged and made a County Gaol;  
     Independent Chapel, North-street, erected; turn-  
     pike gates removed.  
 1844 Almshouses, Magdalen-lane, built; Independent  
     College established.  
 1845 St. Mary's chimes restored; Sydney Smith died;  
     Trinity Church built.



- 1846 Mills offered himself; political riots; London Inn damaged; Wesleyan Chapel restored; Yeomanry and Pensioners called out.
- 1847 Dr. Crotch died at Taunton; Billett-street laid out; organ erected at the church of the Holy Trinity.
- 1848 Park-street opened; Assembly-rooms, London Hotel, built.
- 1849 Somersetshire Archaeological Society established; Board of Health founded; cholera broke out at the Taunton Union Workhouse.
- 1850 Old Assize Courts enlarged and altered; Princities settled in Taunton; town sewered and drained.
- 1851 The "Taunton Cabinet" manufactured and exhibited; fever hospital at Taunton Union Workhouse erected; Wilton tower rebuilt; schools of the Holy Trinity erected; the "Western News" established; population, 14,176.
- 1852 The Wesleyan College erected; Labouchere and Mills elected; Ramsden returned on Mills' resignation; railway to Yeovil opened; 1st Somerset Militia embodied; Castle Hotel enlarged and improved.
- 1853 Charitable Trust Act passed, whereby the Feoffees of Taunton town lands were forbidden to renew lives.
- 1853 Fish Market built.
- 1854 Taunton Manure Works erected; the Cemetery laid out; the Madrigal Society established.
- 1855 The New Shire Hall built; the College School resuscitated.
- 1855 Andrew Cresse died; Stuckey's Bank restored.
- 1857 Telegraphic communication extended to Taunton; police station erected.
- 1857 "Taunton Gazette and Farmers' Journal" established.
- 1858 The restoration of St. Mary's tower commenced; Rifle Corps established.
- 1859 School of Art founded; Mills returned at the head of the poll; Taunton Water Company established; Labouchere raised to the Peerage; Bentinck elected; West Somerset Archery Society founded.
- 1860 Feoffees purchase almshouses, South-street; R. C. Church of St. George's erected; Post-office enlarged; Militia quartered at Taunton Barracks; Gymnasium established.
- 1861 Ancient pottery discovered at Norton; population of Taunton, 15,538; large Assembly-rooms, London Hotel, built.
- 1862 West Somerset Railway opened; St. Mary's Vestry Hall erected; Memorial Hall, Paulstreet, built; Taunton bathing-place established; busts of "Somersetshire Worthies" placed at the Shire Hall.
- 1862 St. Mary's tower completed; Trinity district a separate parish; the Banwell relics deposited in Museum.
- 1863 St. John's Church erected; the Castle Hall converted and rendered suitable for exhibitions, &c.
- 1864 Speke welcomed to Taunton (died soon after); the second Telegraph Company established; Ebenezer Chapel erected; the organ of St. Mary's rebuilt; the Board of Health's annual expenditure £5,360; Magdalene-street formed; St. Mary's new tower struck by lightning.
- 1865 The old White Hart converted into a shop; the West Somerset Mineral line opened for traffic; the moors drained into the Tone; the Taunton and Chard Railway cut; the Wilts and Dorset Bank built; the Somerset and Devon Railway commenced; West of England New Bank erected; Barclay and Hay elected for this borough (Cox and Austin offered); St. James's-street widened.
- 1866 National School built; restoration of St. James' tower commenced; Huish's Almshouses erected; Grand Western Canal purchased by Bristol and Exeter Railway; Taunton Castle sold; E. W. Cox, Esq., Lord of Manor; Castle-street widened; Taunton College projected.
- 1867 New pulpit, St. Mary's; New Independent College commenced; railway station rebuilt.
- 1868 Order of Perpetual Adoration settled here; Barclay and Cox elected; James succeeds Cox; Gas Works enlarged; Market Cross built; salmon placed in the Tone; new Corn Exchange and Fish Market; canals to Tiverton and Chard destroyed; butchers' shops all closed.
- 1869 Attempt to abolish Market Trust; Taunton Church Institute founded; Lord Taunton died; Oxford Local Examinations; Wesleyan Chapel rebuilt; rectorial tithes to Vicar; Water Company enlarge reservoir; Taunton Musical Society established.
- 1870 Western Counties' Exhibition; Taunton College opened; Independent College opened; St. Mary's chancel improved; fire-escape provided; telegraphs worked by Post-office; Elementary Education Act passed; Wilton Church re-seated, &c.

Although Taunton has not often been the scene of public events, there has been no lack of men among its inhabitants and neighbours who have taken their share in local and county improvements and government, &c., many of whom have, in their time, played an active part in their country's history, either in war, commerce, the fine arts, benevolence, literature, or government—men of genius in their various departments who have surpassed their contemporaries in nobleness of character, generosity of disposition, or greatness of mind; others, living in critical or perilous times, have been found to be "the right men in the right places;" and have wielded the pen or the sword for their country's good, and to their time-honoured renown. Of such men the town and neighbourhood may justly be proud, and, whether present or past, Tauntonians will always take pleasure in hearing of their generous deeds or noble actions.

Acland, Margaret, donor of the "Widow's Money" Charity, 1670.

Acland, Sir P. P. F. P., promoted West Somerset Railway.

Alfred the Great born 849, the story of whose adventures at Athelney and his defeat of the Danes is well known.

Allsine, Rev. Josk., Nonconformist, was some time curate of St. Mary's, Taunton, and author of "Call to the Unconverted."

Atwood, Geo., Archdeacon of Taunton, and incumbent of St. James's, 1714.

Barclay, M.P. for Taunton.

Barat, Thos., the first member of Parliament for Taunton, 1409.

Bathe, Robt., founder of a chantry, St. Mary's Church, 1463.

Bere, Rich., Abbot of Glastonbury. The initials "R. B.," supposed to have been those of "Richard Bere," were on the late tower of St. Mary's.

Billett, J., founder of Taunton Eye Infirmary, 1817.

Blake, Dr., suggested, in the columns of the *Taunton Courier*, the establishment of the Taunton Hospital, and was subsequently an active supporter of it.

Blake, Mary, for presenting colours to Duke of Monmouth at Taunton, committed to Dorchester Gaol, and there died, 1685.

Blake, Robert, General and Admiral at sea, member for the town, and defender of Taunton Castle when besieged, 1645.

Bonwell, Lord, defender of Taunton Castle, 1449.

Bray, Sir Reginald, architect to Henry VII., supposed by some to have been the builder of the tower of Taunton St. Mary Magdalene.

Burgess, Thos., first minister of Baptist Chapel, 1680.

Button, Robt., presented ground for Quakers' Chapel, 1693.

Cabbell, Dr., the last mayor of Taunton, 1791.

Chard, Thos., Abbot of Ford, a benefactor of St. Mary's.

Chaucer, Thomas (son of the celebrated poet Geoffrey Chaucer), constable of Taunton Castle, 1417.

Corfield, Frederick, donor of new organ, St. James's Church, 1812.

Cottle, Rev. Dr. James, incumbent of St. James'; afterwards vicar of St. Mary's; restored St. Mary's Church, 1840; and published "History of the Church."

Cox, Edward W., Serjeant-at-Law, editor and proprietor of the "Law Times" and several other publications, Lord of the Manor of Taunton.

Cranmer, Thomas, Archdeacon of Taunton, 1522; afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

Crosse, Andrew (of Fyne Court, Broomfield), celebrated electrician and philosopher, died 1856.

Crotch, William, Mus. Doc., a great musician; died at Taunton, 1847.

Clark, Rev. W. R., vicar of St. Mary's, prebendary of Wells, rural dean, and author of several theological works, &c.

Davis, Henry, builder of St. Mary's tower, 1860; and St. John's Church and spire, 1863.

Denison, Ven. G. Anthony, Archdeacon of Taunton, polemical writer, and unflinching advocate of the Church of England.

Edwards, Thomas, represented Taunton in the first Parliament, 1409.

Esdaile, E. J., keeper of Taunton Castle, appointed 1786.

Fairfax, Sir Thomas, relieved Taunton when besieged 1645.

Feversham, Lord, Commander-in Chief of the King's forces against Duke of Monmouth, 1645.

Fox, Richard, Bishop of Winchester, founded Taunton College, 1622.

Gifford, William, Bishop of Winchester, rebuilt Taunton Castle, 1100; founded Priory and Canons, 1127.

Gill, William, last mayor of Taunton under the first charter, 1683.

Goring, Lord, besieged Taunton, 1645.

Grey, Lord, commander of the Duke of Monmouth's cavalry, 1645.

Grey, Robert, founded and endowed alma-houses in East-street, 1635.

Guildford, Earl of, the last recorder of Taunton, 1792.

Hammet, Sir B., M.P. for Taunton, 1811; built Hammet-street, and made other public improvements; made keeper of castle, 1815.

- Hood, Sir A., member for West Somerset, promoted West Somerset Railway.
- Hugo, Rev. Thomas, celebrated archæologist and writer.
- Hill, Bowland, some time vicar of Kingston.
- Huish, Richard, founded and endowed alms-houses Hammet-street, 1615.
- Hurly, Rev. James, incumbent St. James's, Wilton, and Trull; Master of Taunton College; and author of various works, 1783.
- Ina, King of the West Saxons, builder of the Taunton Castle.
- Jeffries, Judge, a man who, in the name of justice, committed the most atrocious barbarities in this town, 1685.
- James, H., Q.C., M.P. for Taunton.
- Keene, Francis, last Constable of Taunton Castle, 1644.
- Kingleake, A. W., M.P., author of "Eöthen" and "History of Crimean War."
- Kingleake, R. A., promoted the restoration of Wellington Monument, and placing the busts at the Shire Hall, 1862.
- Kirke, Colonel, officer of King's army, committed great barbarities at White Hart Inn and other places in Taunton, 1680.
- Lackington, James, the celebrated London bookseller, born at Wellington, founder of the Wesleyan Chapel, Upper High-street, 1806.
- Lambright, Thomas, founder of the Taunton Leper House, East Beach road, 1260.
- Langdon, Thomas, Bishop of Winchester, builder of porter's lodge, Taunton Castle, 1495.
- Langton, W. M. P. Gore, M.P. for West Somerset.
- Lethbridge, Sir John, patron of St. James's, 1864.
- Members of this family represented the county, and lived at Taunton, in a house now used as silk-mills, East-gate.
- Lyme, Simon de, first vicar of the then Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene, 1308.
- Lytton, Lady Bulwer, authoress of several works, 1860.
- Malet, John, obtained the first Act of Parliament for the navigation of the river Tone, 1679.
- Marriott, J. W., founder of the *Taunton Courier*, 1808.
- Men, Dr. Peter, Bishop of Bath and Wells, procured the new charter for Taunton, which was lost 1791.
- Meredith, Robert, founder of the "Coats and Cloaks" Charity, 1677.
- Mitchell, Rev. Canon, promoter and first priest of St. George's Roman Catholic Church.
- Menmouth, Duke, aspired to the throne, landed at Lyme, marched to Taunton, where he assumed the title of King, and was beheaded in London, 1685.
- Moore, Thomas, purchased the Priory at the dissolution of monasteries, 1560.
- Newton, George, vicar of St. Mary's, 1654; left the town during the siege of Taunton; evicted for Nonconformity, 1686, and became first pastor of Paul's Meeting, 1670.
- Norris, Henry, clever linguist and writer, 1774.
- Pope, Thomas, builder of almshouses, East-street, 1660.
- Portman—The Portman family represented Taunton, 1685, 1734, and at other times. The house now occupied by Mr. John Turle, Fore-street, was their town residence.
- Prince, Brother, founder of the notorious sect, the Princites, at Taunton, 1850.
- Robert, the first Archdeacon, 1106.
- Saunders, Simon, founder of the Saunders' Charity, 1591.
- Savage, James, librarian, author of the "History of Taunton," 1822, and other works.
- Seppings, Sir Robert, surveyor of the navy, and originator of many improvements in shipbuilding, lived for several years and died (in 1840) at Taunton.
- Shillibeer, H., author of "The Customs of the Manor of Taunton Deane," 1838.
- Smith, Bernard, mayor of Taunton, 1696. The seal of the late corporation, with his name thereon, is still in the possession of the Clerk to the Feoffees.
- Smith, Rev. F. J., first incumbent of Holy Trinity Church, founder of the Trinity schools, donor of magnificent organ, 1850: he also promoted the re-opening of the College School, subscribed very handsomely towards St. Mary's tower, and built the beautiful church and spire of St. John's, 1863.
- Smith, Rev. Sydney (of Coombe Florey), a clever Divine, and celebrated wit, 1850.
- Speke, Captain (of Jordans), discoverer of the source of the Nile, and author of work on the subject, 1863.
- Standert, H. C., a clever surgeon, to whose memory the Standert museum, at the Taunton Hospital, was founded.
- Stephen, the first prior of Taunton, 1175.
- Stowell, Lord, eminent jurist.
- Talbot, Miss, of passing notoriety, resided for some time at the Taunton Convent.
- Taunton, Lord, as Mr. Labouchere, represented this town many years in Parliament; on several occasions he was member of her Majesty's Cabinet.
- Toulmin, Dr., minister of Baptist Chapel, 1803; author of "History of Taunton," 1791.
- Tozer, Rev. Isaac, opened the present Paul's Meeting, 1797.
- Trowbridge, Thomas, founded a charity, 1614.
- Tynte, Colonel, C. K. K., Provincial Grand Master of the Freemasons of Somerset, 1850; laid foundation-stone of new markets, February 28, 1821; and St. Mary's new tower, August 3, 1858.

Upton, Rev. James, Master of Taunton College School, 1749; author of many works.

Wainfleet, Dr., Bishop, of Winchester, presented land for Guildhall.

Ward, Samuel, Archdeacon of Taunton, 1645; he assisted in the translation of the Bible.

Warre, Rev. F., rector of Bishop's Lydeard, archæologist; died 1869.

Warres, the, of Hestercombe, have much distinguished themselves.

Warren, Matthew, minister of Paul's Meeting, 1687; conducted a large school of Nonconformists at Taunton.

Wykeham, William, Bishop of Winchester, said to have been the original builder of St. Mary's tower, 1395.

Having treated of the town generally, we propose to give some account of the principal buildings, companies, and events in detail, selecting such subjects as may be considered most interesting to the general reader. The histories published by Toulmin and Savage contain much information that in these days of dispatch and steam are not appreciated by those who have not much time to spare. In addition to the selection of the most interesting subjects we propose to add some particulars that former writers have omitted, and supply information down to the present time. Fifty years have nearly elapsed since the last history was published. Many eventful circumstances have occurred since that time; numerous buildings have been erected, and a large number of associations and companies have been established. Greater changes have taken place in Taunton within the past fifty years than in any such previous time.

The first building we shall speak of is one that deserves a foremost position, as being the oldest of any in the town. We allude to Taunton Castle.

There is, probably, no building in this town or neighbourhood so interesting to a Tauntonian as the one we now propose to consider. Whether we regard its antiquity, its purpose, or the various associations connected with its history, Taunton Castle claims our veneration and regard.

Few buildings have undergone more changes, chances, or variations. Built originally for a king's palace, it has passed down to an episcopal residence, a baron's castle, a manorial court, a judicial lodging, and a private residence.

History informs us that A.D. 700, Ina, King of the West Saxons, anxious to prevent the frequent attacks and inroads of the neighbouring chiefs, selected this site for the erection of a stronghold and palace for his court. Great judgment was shown in this selection. Standing upon a slight eminence, bounded on several sides by the

river Tone or its tributaries, in the midst of a fruitful and healthy vale, Taunton Castle, although only a wicker building, soon became a noted place. But what gave it standing and importance was the character of its ruler, King Ina, whose ability as a lawgiver has already been mentioned, and many of whose laws are yet in existence. The prosperity of Taunton Castle was only limited, for within fifteen years of its erection Queen Echalburga (Ina's sister) besieged, captured, and destroyed it. But, like the Phoenix, it soon arose from its ashes, for castles in those days, being mostly of wicker work or timber, were soon built, and sooner demolished. A new building was erected, defended by a moat, earthworks, palisades, and a barbican. Soon afterwards other erections followed, and about the tenth century a Norman keep was built at the north-east corner.

The Castle having been presented to the Bishop of Winchester, it became his occasional episcopal residence, and was often strengthened and repaired by succeeding bishops. During the reign of King Stephen considerable additions were made, intended to resist the new and increased warlike engines of that period. A portion of the building erected at this time is yet standing at the north-east corner, and appears to have formed part of the wall of the water gate.

In the reign of Henry I., Bishop Gifford, of Winchester, repaired, rebuilt, and added to the structure; but the greatest contributor was Bishop Horne, who, in 1577, built the lodges, a considerable portion of which remains. The south front is nearly 200 feet in length, and the great hall 120 feet by 30 feet. In this hall were held the various Courts Leet and Baron of this Manor and Borough.

At the time we are now speaking of Taunton Castle had become an extensive and strong pile of buildings, surrounded with a single and double moat, enclosing the inner and outer baileys, the college school, the mint, the exchequer, and the various castle buildings and halls, the roofs being flat and covered with lead. An officer was appointed to take charge of the place, and certain fees and perquisites became his due. The salary in cash was two pence per day.

In the year 1497 the Castle sustained a siege. Many disaffected people from Cornwall, headed by the noted Perkin Warbeck, attacked the place, but upon the king's approach the insurgents disbanded, and peace was restored.

The Castle suffered some amount of injury during the siege of Taunton by Lord Goring, the marks of the cannon balls being yet visible against the western walls. The assizes were now held here, and we need not remind the reader that it was here that Judge Jeffries (of infamous

memory) held his bloody assize after the rebellion of the ill-fated James, Duke of Monmouth. The "Great Hall," as it was called, was erected by Robert Horne, Bishop of Winchester, A.D. 1577, and was originally one room. It was probably built for the purpose of holding the ancient Manorial Courts therein. In a presentment made December 4, 1647, it was stated that all the courts for the manor of Taunton Deane have been, time out of mind, kept in the Great Hall, within the Castle of Taunton. The arms of the founder, with the date, are to be seen on the south wall. The hall, in 1787, from want of proper care, became so ruinous that the assizes would have been removed and lost to the town, when one of the members for the borough, Sir Benjamin Hammet, obtained from the Bishop of Winchester the grant of the office of the "Keeper of the Castle." He then divided the Hall into two courts, and put on the present roof, the expense incurred being upwards of £400—a considerable sum in those days.

In 1816 Time had again left her marks, and decay recommenced, when a subscription was entered into by the townsmen, and £200 raised for the necessary repairs and alterations, and part of the fittings lately removed were then erected. Again, in 1850, the public had to step in with their subscriptions and make better arrangements for the convenience of the courts, or Taunton would have lost the assizes; but upon the completion of the New Shire Hall, in 1855, the business of the sessions and assizes, together with the county and barristers' courts, was removed to the new building. The Great Hall having been restored to its original size and noble appearance, the whole newly floored, and a large window inserted where much needed, it is now a room which, for antiquity and size, is not to be equalled in the West of England, and of which the town may well be proud. From the appearance of some curious arches and other masonry under two of the windows there seems to have been a cellar, or crypt, beneath. Tradition says that such is the case under the other parts of the old Castle.

Our readers are probably aware that, although Taunton Castle was originally built for a royal residence, in after years it was fortified and defended by an outer and inner moat, into which flowed the streams from the Blackdown-hills, the river Tene forming its northern protection. The outermost included the Castle Green, Porter's Lodge, the College School, the inn called the Winchester Arms, with the ground around it. These moats may yet be traced, the streams known as the "rhines" still running in their courses. A few years ago, in constructing the town sewers, the extent of the outer moat was laid open—it was upwards of 12 feet deep and about 16 feet wide.

The drawbridge was on the east side of the arches of

the gate-house at the entrance to Castle Green. The western gate was on the slope adjoining the Winchester Arms Inn, and here the oak beams forming portions of the ancient barbican were discovered a few years ago.

The inner moat enclosed the Castle proper, and ran around close to the Castle walls on the south side, the drawbridge being on the south side of the entrance tower known as Langdon's gateway, and separated the inner from the outer bailey. Portions of this moat were in existence so late as the year 1787, when they were filled in by the late Sir Benjamin Hammet, M.P. for this town.

During the past few years a drain has been constructed from Castle Green to the inner bailey, or castle yard. In excavating the trench to the depth of 12 to 16 feet, the whole of the massive walls which formed portions of the moat and bearings of the drawbridge have been laid open. About six feet on the north side of Langdon's tower is a wall 12 feet deep and about 5 feet in thickness. Near this spot tradition says there was formerly a cave, and we have been informed that people now living have actually seen it; but we can find no trace of it.

The great arches which carried the drawbridges are held together with a solid mass of flint masonry foundation, not less than seven to eight feet in thickness and ten feet in depth, thrown in with liquid lime, and forming a concrete like a solid stone. About three feet further on is a wall of flint and ragstone, 3½ feet thick and 12 feet in depth, which formed the north side of the moat. Eighteen feet from this was a similar wall forming the south side, and between the two a pier was erected of flat red bricks, which probably formed a centre bearing for the drawbridge.

Still following towards the south, we find another wall, nearly six feet in thickness and upwards of fourteen feet in depth, constructed in the most substantial manner. At a distance of no less than forty feet from the drawbridge this wall is thicker at the top than below, and was formed of earlier buildings, a piece of a very handsome Hamdon-hill stone moulded window mullion having been taken out of its centre, and a large portion of the head of an Early English window was found in the adjoining foundation.

The whole of the ground fifty feet north of Langdon's gateway, and of the depth of fourteen feet, is composed of loose and artificial matter, consisting of old rubbish, stone, sand, earth, &c., with a large quantity of human and other bones, skulls, teeth, &c., and the usual accompaniment of oyster shells, smoking pipes, and broken pieces of ware, &c. Some bivalve shells and some petrified matter of water formation were also discovered. A spring of water rose and flowed for a considerable time near the last-mentioned wall.

In passing, it may be well to observe that in the account given of Taunton Castle by the Rev. F. Warre that gentleman stated he considered that the north wall of the great hall was formerly a part of the ancient fortifications. Since the time of his writing the paper, various alterations having been made in this wall, several small stone arched doorways, just large enough for one person to pass through, have been discovered. These were, doubtless, "sally-ports;" and this fact confirms his suppositions.

He also stated he considered the gateways to be older than the date on Langdon's arms; and this also seems confirmed from the fact having been proved that the arms were only placed over the gateway at the entrance of Castle Green about 60 years ago. They were formerly fixed on an old house adjoining, the motto being fixed above Langdon's arms, instead of, as present, divided.

The defaced stone on the south-east gable of the Castle (supposed to have been possibly mutilated arms) formerly bore a sun dial, and was fixed in a gable adjoining Langdon's gateway, which gable was removed by Sir B. Hammet in 1787 and the stone fixed to the present position.

For further particulars respecting the interesting old building we refer our readers to Savage's History of Taunton and an account of Taunton Castle by the late Rev. F. Warre, published in the "Proceedings" of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society.

We often hear the past called "the good old times;" but in our humble opinion all classes enjoy far more comforts, conveniences, and privileges in the present than in any past age. There is also a similar idea entertained respecting ancient and modern buildings. An ancient building gives the notion of massive walls and great strength, and a modern of half-brick partitions and lath and plaster fronts. But if we examine more closely we shall find that the same idea will be likely to be handed down to posterity respecting the buildings of the present day; for in a few years the flimsy erections now in vogue will be "nowhere," as our sporting friends would say, and none but the substantial and well-built edifices of the past and present time will be found standing. The majority of ancient buildings were of cob or mud, covered with thatch; many of wood or wattle, which was a series of rough poles, filled in with mud, and plastered over the ceilings; many were formed with river reeds and mortar, and an inferior slate, thatch, or common tiles, protected the roof. If kept dry these houses lasted some years, but few survived a century.

In calling up a vision of ancient Taunton, we must remember that the habits of the people differed much from

those of the present day, and that in erecting a residence our forefathers had to entertain other requirements than are now necessary. As there were no police, but a number of lawless tramps about, and occasionally an attack was made from the vassals of a neighbouring chief, safety was an important matter. So, again, from want of the sliding sashes and plate glass of the present day, a well-sheltered situation was necessary. Houses generally stood singly, each on its own plot of land, with the high-pointed gables against the roads and the "drangways" or water-courses between them. The dwellings of the richer classes were more substantially built—the walls of stone, the timber-work of oak, and the roofs covered with lead or tiles. After a chief had selected the site and built his castle, or the abbot had chosen a fruitful valley for the erection of his abbey, or few houses of the dependents would soon spring up, then a wall was necessary to enclose and protect the little colony; and thus many of our great cities or busy towns came into existence. Such was the case in our own ancient borough. The houses were generally low, and a tall man must have lowered his head at all doorways. The expense of glass generally caused the windows to be small, and the wooden lap, up by night and down by day, was the substitute for the present plate-glass front. The goods for sale were exposed to view on high benches. The upper floors overhung the lower, and the roofs again projected forward, and discharged the water from "spouts" into the middle of the roads. Drainage was carried on in the open-gutter system, and the parish pump gave the "water supply." Public lighting was either a superfluity, or a dozen oil lamps were considered the height of perfection.

Business commenced early in the morning, and by three or four o'clock p.m. the tradesmen called for their pewter of home-brewed ale and pipes, and sat at their doorways and cracked their jokes and nuts; and when the curfew rang at eight o'clock it was the "cover-fire" in reality, for all retired to rest.

There are but few mediæval buildings left in Taunton—many have entirely disappeared, and the number of those left is constantly decreasing.

We have intimated that the town was encircled with walls and fortifications. These were destroyed by order of Charles II., A.D. 1660, and it is now somewhat difficult to say the exact position and site. The river Tone formed the boundary to the town and castle on the north; the wall must have commenced on the east, near the old Priory, and run in a zig-zag direction towards the "East-gate;" thence on the south towards the Mount, and so on to the "West-gate," near the present gaol, and probably followed the course of the Blackdown-hill stream to the



river Tone, enclosing the Castle, which formed the north-west barrier. There was, doubtless, a north gate at the ford, near the present bridge to North-town. The Castle also had its walls and moat. One entrance near the Corn Exchange now stands, and the remains of the western entrance, near the Winchester Arms, are yet to be seen. It will be observed that East-reach was without the walls, which accounted for the great injury it sustained during the siege in the year 1645.

Very few ancient towns have such a modern look as Taunton at the present day, and the breadth of the streets assist in giving the modern appearance. Improvements are visible everywhere. Many new streets have sprung up within the past few years.

In giving an outline of old Taunton we cannot bind ourselves to any exact time, as many of the dates are unknown. We now propose to give some account and explanation of the old town. We will commence by stating that the town consisted of the following districts, viz. :—The town proper (within the walls), the castle (in Bishop's Hull parish and outside the gates and walls), the North Town (beyond the river), the South Town or Shuttern (on the South), the Well Town or Wilten (to the West), the East Stretch, or East Reach (on the opposite side).

We will now ask the reader to accompany us through the town, entering on the North side. Near the junction of the old road from the Quantock Hills and that from the North Coast was the outlying district of North Town, which contained mostly poor houses on a low site, and was often flooded. North Town had its rights and privileges independent of the town, and still holds its own fairs with peculiar customs, and formerly many amusements. It contains a noted spring of soft water, at one time much valued, besides several running streams.

Approaching the town we cross the river Tone over an old stone bridge of six arches, with an island between, the want of centre arches often causing formerly the floods before referred to. Near this spot was the ancient church or chapel of St. Leonard, served by a priest from the Priory. Probably this church was destroyed at the dissolution of the abbeys and monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. Here was also the site of the ancient Roman or British ford; and we have been informed that the pitched or paved roadway is yet in existence a few yards to the East of the present bridge, although buried many feet below the surface; and doubtless near this spot must have been the North gate of the town. Near here was afterwards built the "Bridewell."

Passing through the town gate we observe on the right the mill ford, and then we come to a block of houses

directly in the middle of the present road and forming a narrow entrance on either side and severally called "Grouping-lane" and "Horse-lane." We are now in the North-street, on the right of which was a passage leading to the mills, probably the "Powder Mills" of the Castle, and an entrance there to the North or water gate. Subterranean passages were said to have existed between the houses on the Western side of North-street and the Castle.

Following the moat, we arrive at the "Bull Ring," and turning directly to the right come to the Eastern entrance to the Castle (with its ponderous gates and portcullis), which we will describe on a future occasion.

The street now becomes very narrow, and divides into two branches, the site of the present Parade being completely covered (except at the South-West corner) with a large number of small houses, including fourteen inns, a row of butchers' shambles, a place of confinement called the "Little Ease," and another building called the "Cow-house." The whole district was called the "Cornhill," or sometimes "The Island." Turning to the left opposite the entrance to the East gate of the Castle we come to "Great Church-lane," which was the only roadway to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, and was about ten feet wide. The entrance may yet be seen between North-street and Fore-street.

We ought not to forget the house at the North side of the Eastern entrance to Bath-place. This edifice is of ancient date, probably about the sixteenth century, and contains many curiosities in carving and plaster. The "Hall" or "Chamber" is decorated with a fine geometrical ceiling and handsome fire-place, with emblematic figures, possibly representing Truth and Justice on either side, with Abraham's sacrifice in the centre. In the attics may be seen a legend in plaster-work, apparently "The Temptation." Many persons consider that it was here Jeffries held his "Bloody Assize," and there are also traditions of secret ways and trap-doors in the floors.

Opposite these premises, and facing the Cornhill and Market Cross, stood the old White Hart, anciently an hostel of great notoriety. Scenes here took place soon after Monmouth's rebellion that will hardly bear relation, and the thought of which causes a thrill of horror. Near was an open space used as a market place. Here stood the Butter or Market Cross, and on the Northern side of this space was the Town Hall. The site was given by Bishop Waynesfleete. To the South were several fine old houses, some of which, including the Portman Mansion, are yet to be seen, now occupied by the Turle family.

Going back to the roadway to St. Mary's Church (of which more hereafter), we pass on the right Huish's Alms-

houses, then two other almshouses opposite the tower, which were removed by Sir Benjamin Hammet to make room for the street that now bears his name; on the left was St. Mary's Vicarage a comfortable residence in its own grounds and lawn; and to the right the parish workhouse, a portion of which was in existence until a few years ago.

Previous to the passing of the Poor-law Act, each parish had its own workhouse, which in late years were generally exceedingly old, and in many cases decayed and dilapidated. A few of these old buildings are yet to be seen in the town and neighbourhood, some of which possess an architectural character. The old Poorhouse of St. James's stand about 50 feet from the road on the North side of East Reach, and is a plain brick building of no pretensions. Wilton Poorhouse was at Sherford, near Haines-hill, but is not worthy a description. There was also a workhouse near North Town Bridge.

Entering the East-street, we find the road nearly blocked up with a smithy and old inn, removed many years since. Proceeding on between numerous quaint shops and gabled houses, we observe on the right more alms houses; they were founded by Robert Grey, and others also by Pope. Opposite these was the Lethbridge family town mansion, with its lawn in front; the street was here much narrowed by the many houses which stood on the Northern side of the present roadway. These houses were removed by an Act of Parliament obtained by the Trustees of the roads. Here was also the "East-gate," which was the scene of so much of the fighting during the siege of Taunton. We now arrive at East Reach, or the "Weaver's Stretch," as it was then called. Passing down we come to the Poorhouse of St. James's parish, and just beyond to a range of ancient buildings, the use of which we are unacquainted with; adjoining was the church or chapel of St. Margaret, now totally destroyed, and its exact site unknown. Among the secular buildings yet in existence in this town, perhaps the most curious, and the one which reminds us more of the habits and customs of former days, is the Leper-house, now used as almshouses for West Monkton, in which parish it is situated. On the outskirts of the town, at the North side of the East Reach road, we can see this singular old building, with its high-thatched roof, and open piazza or walk in front. It was erected by Thomas Lambright, a Taunton man, A.D. 1230, and in the front wall is a nicely carved shield and monegram.

Retracing our steps to the East Gate, and turning to the North, we arrive at the Canon's-street, formerly the aristocratic quarter of the town, and adjacent and leading to the Priory. The history of this celebrated building, together with the church of St. James's, we propose to

describe another time. Leaving the "Prior's Gate" and a number of small almshouses, we arrive at a pleasant residence opposite the church, and which was formerly larger than it is at present. A few years ago a portion of it was taken down, and we have now in our possession a finely-carved oak beam, with the head of the Virgin and gilt crown thereon, which formed part of this building. We have now returned to our starting-point on the north.

Let us now have a peep at the Castle. Standing at the west of the Castle Lodge, we summon the porter or gate-keeper, who, finding we are not a warlike party, lowers the drawbridge, draws the portcullis, opens the gates, and we enter. Crossing the moat, which is here about twenty-five feet wide and twelve feet deep, we observe to the right the Free Grammar School and master's residence, founded and erected in 1522 by Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, a liberal patron of architecture and learning. The buildings face the south, and are a proof of the good taste and substantial workmanship of the time. The open oak roofs are of fine proportions; but that of the school-room is at present concealed by a plaster ceiling. The arms of the founder are over the eastern entrance. The outer moat and wall which protected the Castle enclosed this building as well as the outer bailey, or, as we now call it, the "Castle Green," which was used as a burial-place. The Castle was also protected by the inner moat, which ran directly under the walls of the buildings and enclosed the inner bailey. The entrance was through the porter's lodge, built by Bishop Langdon A.D. 1493. Near the western gate we observe the inn, which was the hostel for the numerous travellers which constantly visited the Castle. Passing through the gate we arrive at the district which, in later years, received the name of Tangiers—so called from its having been the quarters, during the wars, of a regiment from Tangiers, in Africa. Another regiment was stationed about half-a-mile to the west, and the place is now called Gibraltar, probably under similar circumstances; and it may be conjectured that French Weir also received its name in the same manner. After leaving Tangiers we arrive at the spot where stood St. Paul's Church, now totally destroyed.

A little to the west, on the site now occupied by Risdon House, stood the Monastery of the Carmelite Friars, founded by Walter de Meriet A.D. 1322, the last portions of which were removed only a few years ago and the fragments deposited in the Archaeological Museum. They appear to have formed a part of the entrance porch, and consisted of some curious arched recesses. From what we can judge of these pieces we presume the Abbey must

have been a fine old building and worthy the purpose and time of its erection.

Passing through St. Paul's Field (the bleaching ground in later days) we arrive at St. Paul's Bridge, and probably also a gate in the town wall.

We now make our way to Well-town or Wilton and the church of St. George—a modest building, the tower of which is new. The old tower was a curiosity from its extreme plainness; it was built of the smallest pebbles, and was said to have been cast in a mould which was shifted up as the work proceeded. We must not forget the Fons George, or Holy Well, the water of which was reported to have effected many a cure. To the south of the church is a spring which was probably the noted fountain.

Retracing our steps by "The Batch," we pass "Turkey-stretch," the spot where the weavers in after years stretched their goods, and arrive at the West Gate, the moat and wall, passing through which we are soon at the South Town, or Shuttern, as it is now called. Crossing the several streams from the Blagdon or Blackdown Hills, and passing the mills which projected far into the present road, we arrive at the top of the High-street: this was nearly blocked up by an old inn called the Full Moon, removed by the commissioners many years ago. On the north was a fine open spot, in the centre of which was a large oak tree, called the "Royal Oak;" and it was around this tree that the various bull and dog fights (now happily abolished) are said to have taken place. From the top of High-street branched the "Carpenters'-lane," now called Mount-street, which led to another place called Gwynne-lane, after the celebrated Nelly Gwynne, who was said to have been a patron of this town.

From the High-street we also ascend to St. Mary-street and to St. Paul's-street. These streets, like the High-street, the East and North-streets, contained a large number of courts, or, as they are locally called, colleges. These were most numerously peopled, and the population of the whole town, when not half its present size, is said to have been over twenty thousand. After the decline of the woollen trade the population diminished to less than one-half; but the old town has now nearly regained its former number.

There are few other memorials of ancient Taunton beyond those mentioned in previous papers. Many have been swept away by the destroyer Time: improvements, from increase of trade, have removed others. We have noticed the destruction of three churches, or chapels, as they were then called, their respective sites being now doubtful. History also mentions several almshouses now no more, the very charities which supported them having

been lost or misappropriated. For many years there was a mint in Taunton, probably in or near the Castle, where coinage was carried on for some ages; and a great deal of Taunton money is yet in existence. There are many ancient customs, old relics, and curious matters that have passed away even during our own time. We remember the tattered flags of the Taunton corps that were formerly hung in the chancel of St. Mary's Church; nor do we forget the beautiful pulpit and carved organ screen in the same edifice. At St. James's there was once a fine screen, which is said to have been sold for a few pounds. The parish beadle, with his gold lace, and the churchyard stocks are also within our remembrance; but are now numbered with the things of the past. In these days a sedan chair or a coach and four would cause the rising generation to give a look of surprise.

Some of the names of places and streets of this town deserve the attention of the archæologist, such as Chip-lane, Star-plat, Turkey-stretch, Cranbourne-alley, Grouping-lane, Old-plat, French-weir, Tancred-street, Carpenters'-lane, Plaistreet House, Coal-orchard, and many others, whose origin is doubtful.

A consideration of the past, and a review of the peculiar institutions and buildings of ages gone by, should fill us with feelings of gratitude and thankfulness—gratitude that in this day no leper-house for the separation of the afflicted sufferer is required, and of thankfulness that a Gracious Providence has enabled man to make so many great and useful discoveries that all classes can enjoy far more real and solid comfort and happiness in this than in any previous age.

Having traced the rise and progress of our town from its earliest existence to the middle ages, we will now take a passing glance at it during the 17th and 18th centuries.

We have seen Taunton a fortified town, and the time was now approaching when its walls and fortifications should be tested. Civil war desolated the land, and the effects were felt heavily in this town. Taunton sided with the Parliament, and the Royalist Forces besieged it in vain. Macaulay gives a most interesting account, in his History of England, of the determined resistance under its noted Governor, General Blake.

A great plague also happened about this time, so that the town lost a large number of its inhabitants.

Taunton has always maintained a very independent character, and the conduct of the Tauntonians during the siege so enraged the king that he gave orders that its walls should be razed to the ground and its charter annulled. Numbers of houses were unoccupied, and many unclaimed; a number of gentlemen were therefore

appointed as feoffees, to receive the rents and apply the money to charitable purposes. But Taunton, like the phoenix, soon arose from its ashes. Trade, which had been so injured by the late wars and the plague, revived, and the Taunton merchants and manufacturers became noted throughout the length and breadth of the land. The population multiplied far beyond any previous bounds, although the town had not much increased in extent. Before spas and watering-places were so fashionable, Taunton was a favourite winter residence, on account of the mildness of the seasons and the good company and pleasant society of its visitors and inhabitants.

At this time the various political and religious questions of the day were freely discussed in Taunton, and the arbitrary laws passed on the subject produced many dissenters. The town was divided into political factions, and sectarian denominations. Paul's Meeting House was the first chapel erected; then followed the Quakers', the Baptists', &c. The Octagon was built 1778; and, later still, the Wesleyans, excited by the fervent preaching of Whitfield, Wesley, and others, erected their place of worship.

But literature and charity were not forgotten. Various scientific and reading societies were formed and well supported, and, to celebrate the 50th year of the reign of George III., the foundation was laid of a County Hospital, intended to have been one of the largest and most useful institutions in the west of England. Want of funds prevented the desired accomplishment, and the buildings are now used as a convent.

Various public bodies obtained their several Acts of Parliament for the improvement of the town. The trustees of the market bought the triangular piece of ground called the Cornhill, in the centre of the town, surrounded by the Fore-street, pulled down all the old and ruinous buildings thereon, and formed a fine open area and good market. The commissioners of turnpikes opened up several streets, freed the thoroughfares from unsightly obstructions, and constructed good roads through and around the town.

In those days, "when George III. was King," electioneering was carried on in all its ancient vigour, and for fourteen, and even twenty, days were the polls often kept open. The injurious effects upon business were most marked; the serge trade, once the leading manufacture, was lost to this town through the intemperate habits of the artisan during these election squabbles.

But taking all into consideration, great and important changes took place. We must not forget the establishment of banks, the development of the Post-office, the improvement of the Tone navigation, and, last but not

least, the formation of the first Sunday or Poor Man's School.

In attempting to describe Taunton of the existing time we do not propose to treat of the various streets, buildings, &c., as this would be far too much for one short paper, but we would endeavour to point out the distinctive character and features which mark the present from the past ages of its existence, and show the advance which has taken place in its various institutions and local arrangements.

1st, ecclesiastically. At the commencement of this century Taunton was (like the country generally) at a very low ebb in all religious or ecclesiastical matters. Probably the effects of the Continental wars and the revolutionary and infidel state of France, together with great apathy in religious matters among the higher classes, greatly contributed to render the people careless. Gothic architecture suffered from the same cause; and these times produced many of those barbarous designs and pagan ideas exemplified in some of our modern church alterations, and "Salem," "Ebenezer," and "Bethel" chapels. But towards the year 1840 things began to change; and from that time to the present the Church of England, together with the various Dissenting denominations and Roman Catholics, seemed to vie in excelling each other in these good works, and such church and chapel buildings and restorations were never before witnessed. We should say that there must be, at least, double the church and chapel accommodation, and four times as many services as formerly; so that, if the inhabitants do not attain a higher degree of morality and religion, it is not from the want of opportunity. Taunton also boasts of many and good branches of home and foreign missionary work.

2nd, socially. The homes of the people have certainly greatly improved with the times. The higher classes now live in great comfort in their suburban villas, the middle in better and healthier houses, and the working people are generally removed out of the close and dark alleys or colleges to more open and pleasant neighbourhoods. The town has enlarged her borders, and now ranks with the first in England for health and salubrity; it is consequently frequented by those in search of these blessings. These alterations have lately been effected principally through the instrumentality of the Board of Health, which has at considerable expense sewered the whole, or nearly the whole, of this borough; and, although the ratepayers may sometimes think the rates high, they must remember that the matters before referred to cost large sums, and that they well repay the outlay. In a neighbouring town, without a Board of Health, the poor-rates alone are heavier than the public health and the

poor-rates together are here. Then the extension of public lights, the preservation of property by the police, and the making of new, and improvements of old streets, are all costly affairs.

3rd, educationally. If Taunton has at present no leading trade, the various and numerous college schools and seminaries give it considerable importance; and few places (perhaps, none of the size) in the kingdom can boast of such academies as our own town. Nor are the children of the working classes forgotten, for most of the numerous Sunday-schools count their pupils by hundreds, and the rising generation have advantages and privileges never before offered.

4th, politically. "The good old times" in Taunton were noted for the heat and vigour of electioneering strife. Hogarth's pictures give a fair view of the case. The Barrister's Court, and, the late Acts of Parliament, however, have removed most of these scenes; yet party feeling runs high, and, whether it is in the nomination of churchwardens or the election of members for the borough, each party is well watched by a healthy opposition.

Generally. The great inventions of the day have received due attention in Taunton. The steam-engine is heard in various directions. Electric messages flash to all parts of the world. Photography forces into its service old Sol. Nor is chemistry with its marvels forgotten; but each and all the before-mentioned subjects are pressed into the service of man, to make his home more happy, to give him greater comforts, to increase his wealth, to maintain his health, and to shower upon him such blessings and privileges as were never experienced by any previous age.

Gratitude surely is due to that Almighty Power who put it into the heart of man to devise such great and wondrous blessings.

### **Manor of Taunton Borough.**

The Court Leet was the most ancient criminal court in this land. It was the neted system of the celebrated King Alfred, and seems to have been either introduced or improved by him, and was called the "View of Frankpledge," which means the examination or survey of the free pledges. Every man (unless particularly privileged) was bound to provide nine free pledges as sureties of his appearance to answer any complaint, and as pledges of his good behaviour. This system produced singularly good effects among the barbarous people, and the public safety was thereby established throughout the whole country. The Court Leet, although usually governed by the lord of the manor, belongs to the Sovereign, to whom all officers swore obedience; and the steward (generally a lawyer) is the president or judge. Twenty-three good men and true

form the jury, of whom twelve must agree; but the steward has power, if occasion requires it, to press any strangers or travellers into the jury, and to discharge and re-elect a new jury, should they not agree. It was a public court, was usually held in the open air, and formerly all persons above the age of twelve years were bound to appear and be sworn to be true to their king and country. The constables and other officers (and occasionally the mayor) were elected and sworn.

The Court Leet, being the Queen's Court, cannot be held without a special grant or proscriptio from the Sovereign. The jurisdiction of this court appears to have extended to nearly all crimes and misdemeanours. The jury after trial make their presentment or verdict to the steward. The punishment usually awarded by him was fine, levied, if necessary, by the bailiff from the goods of the defaulter. Until the time of the Conquest the Court Leet appears to have been almost the only court of justice in this kingdom. Much of its business is now transacted at the quarter sessions; but, although it is now considered the lowest criminal court, yet it must not be supposed that its power and authority are thereby diminished or gone. On the contrary, there is no offence which it ever did inquire of and punish which it may not inquire into and punish at this day. The highest authorities have admitted that the Court Leet was "much revered and respected." Its proceedings were without expense, as no attorney here practised; for in those days the ancient law was too simple to need their interference, and possibly too just to suffer it. The punishment of the guilty was not aggravated, nor the acquittal of the innocent purchased by the payment of heavy costs or court fees. The peculiarity of this court was, that it seemed to inquire into what was called "everybody's business" and "nobody's business;" and its jurisdiction extended from high treason and murder to the most trivial matter, all offences against the public health, public justice, public peace, besides supervision of all unjust weights or measures; the improper or unfair system of trade and manufactory, poaching, drunkenness, absconding, monopoly, and, in short, all and every matter in which wrong could be done.

In forming a Court Leet the steward issued his precept to the bailiff, directing him to summon the lord's tenants and all who owed suit and service to appear at a stated, time and place. From these the jury were selected, who proceeded to elect the various officers, and transact the usual business. The officers for the past year were called upon to make a return of such parties liable to serve, who should be fit and proper persons to fill the offices for the year ensuing, and who were sworn upon commencing their duties.



Another court, called a Court Baron, is incident to and inseparable from a manor, and was held more often than the Court Leet. In the Court Baron, two of the lord's tenants are elected as judges of fact, and are called the "Free-suitors or Freeholders," but the steward is judge in points of law. This court judged of no offence against the Sovereign, but tried all cases of debts (under forty shillings), trespasses, injuries, &c., &c., and inferior cases. A debt against the lord could not be tried in the Court Leet, because the steward was judge, but in the Court Baron, because there the freeholders were judges. Several special Courts Baron have been held in this borough within the past few years, the intention of passing new Acts of Parliament respecting the town and markets having necessitated them. An annual Court Baron is held at the Castle the day following the Court Leet, to which the principal yeomen of the neighbourhood, with residents in the town, are summoned.

According to Savage's History of Taunton, it appears that the town of Taunton, in the reign of King Ethelard, A.D. 766, which was then a royal residence, was annexed to the See of Winchester, and that the connection has ever since been kept up. The bailiff or bailiffs have ever been the governing power, with the exception of the short time the town possessed a Corporation. The bailiffs are now, and have been, the returning-officers, though at one time the constables jointly returned with them. The constables had, until the reign of James I., a mint at Taunton; and, according to the will of the donors, they have always had the distribution of the charities.

The office of bailiff appears to have been chiefly connected with the convening the Courts Leet, and carrying out the orders of the lord and steward.

The office of the constables is very ancient and honourable, and is known in many countries besides our own, it having existed among the Romans, and by them probably been introduced into this country. The first statute which appears to notice the office of constable is 13 Edward I., c. 6, wherein it is ordained "That in every hundred there shall be chosen two constables to make view of armour," &c., &c., since which time the office has been familiarly known in law, and various duties have been imposed upon it. The high constables are chosen at the leet town of the hundred or by justices of the peace. Their duties were formerly very multifarious, and consisted chiefly in repressing felonies, keeping the peace, marking the boundaries, &c., &c. These duties are now performed by police-constables and others.

The constables are elected at the Court Leet annually, and are to be sworn in upon entering on the duties of their office, when they should receive the silver-headed staves

from their predecessors. They are the servants of the Queen, whom they engage faithfully to serve.

The duties of the constables appear to be principally these :—

- 1st. The distribution of the town charities ;
- 2nd. The care of the public scales ;
- 3rd. The billeting of the army or volunteers ;
- 4th. The nominations for several almshouses ; and
- 5th. The providing of the constables' feast, or town dinner, to the lord's tenants and others.

The duty of the constables, with their assistants the tythingmen, or aldermen, was to keep the peace, arrest offenders, prevent offences, and keep a surveillance of all rogues, tramps, poachers, "night-walkers," and such-like. The penalty for refusing to serve was five pounds.

The jury were to inquire as to the manner in which the past officers had done their duty, and also the superintendence of the highways, the church, mill, or market-paths, the improper erection of buildings, the fines due to the lord, and, in short, all and every matter that could affect the public. Such business as is now divided and transacted by the various commissioners and trustees of markets, turnpikes, Board of Health, and the parish officers, &c., &c.

The portreeves or portgreaves were formerly the chief officers, and were appointed to take the general superintendence of the place. Probably also they had the care of the keys of the castle, town, or place.

The duty of the ale-tasters and shamble-keepers was the prevention of forestalling and monopoly of provisions, and attention to the wholesome quality and quantity of articles of food.

The rhine-ridders were to prevent trespass, or the removing of ancient bounds, and the keeping all rhines, drains, and gutters, &c., free of obstruction and nuisance.

The duty of the searchers and sealers of leather, &c., was to see that no improperly-manufactured leather goods were offered for sale.

The searchers of green skins were to take care that no cutting or injury was done and concealed in the various skins, which were such an important article of use and trade, and which were often sold in closed packets ; and they were to place their mark upon all they examined and found perfect.

The Cornhill-keeper had the supervision of the market, inspection of weights and measures, and the general arrangement of the public sale of marketable produce.

In conclusion, the Court Leet was venerable for its antiquity, honourable for its constitution, excellent in its institution, most useful in its effects, influence and jurisdiction, and was the glory of our ancient and highly-favoured land.



Of all the various officers before-mentioned, the constables have always occupied, and yet occupy, a most important position. We therefore propose to enter more fully into the particulars of their duties, especially those of the five subjects previously mentioned.

In passing we may observe that considerable difficulty has been experienced for many years from the want of information of the duties devolving on the constables. On the appointment of Mr. Edward Jeboult, in the year 1862, it was found that no books, papers, or lists were then in existence, although they were in use some 200 years previously. Therefore, at considerable labour, he used his exertions to obtain reliable information, and caused all to be carefully entered in a large book, which has ever since been handed down to succeeding constables.

The following extracts from the said book may be of interest to our readers:—

### 1st.—The Town Charities.

By a decree of the Court of Chancery, made in 1729 (3rd George II.), respecting the town lands of Taunton, it appears that the constables and others exhibited a bill of complaint to the Court against the feoffees of the town, and after investigation it was decreed that three-fourths of the proceeds or rents of certain properties in Taunton, Upottery, &c. (all of them of the yearly value of £200 and upwards), should be annually paid over by the said feoffees to the constables of Taunton, to be by them distributed, in coats, cloaks, and money, to the poor of the said town, and that after fourteen days' notice the constables should render to the feoffees a full account, with receipts, of such distribution, for their examination and audit. (The names of the feoffees, 1863, a list of the feoffee property in the borough, and a copy of the decree of the Court of Chancery are entered in the book.) The feoffees meet at Pattison's Castle Hotel, on St. Thomas's day (December 21), when the constables meet them, with their accounts for audit and a sample-coat and cloak.

### 2nd.—The Market Scales.

It appears that from time immemorial the constables have enjoyed the privilege or monopoly of the public or market scales. When the Trustees of Taunton Market obtained their Act of Parliament it was provided that this privilege should be preserved to the constables, and that, as the portreeves of Taunton claimed a property in the old market, an annuity of £18 should be paid as a compensation for their rights in the said market. It is understood that the question as to the right of the constables to retain the monopoly of the scales has been tried, and that the matter was decidedly settled in their favour. It has

been the custom of the borough to elect the retiring constables as portreeves for the year next following, and the two before-mentioned sums have been applied to the liquidation of the town dinner. It is said that the scales formerly produced above £50 per annum, although they have been let so low as £20. With good scales and proper management, and protection to the lessee, they can, no doubt, be made to produce a far higher sum than at present. The scales and weights are the actual property of the constables for the time being, who pay the sum of £5 to their predecessors for them, and receive the same amount from their successors. The scales and weights are liable to be seized if not kept correct; and it should be made a part of the duty of the lessee to see that they are just, and he should be held responsible for their safety. It is usual for the lessee to pay six months' rent in advance. The scales produced in 1862 £30; but the constables have now reason to believe that large quantities of goods and materials are weighed elsewhere than at the legally-appointed place.

### 3rd.—Billeting.

A billet-book is provided for this purpose, in which all particulars are to be entered. Tickets are to be supplied to soldiers, volunteers, &c., on application, stating the men and also the number at each house.

### 4th.—The Almshouses.

The constables have the appointment to Nos. 1 to 8, and 17 to 20, inclusive of the new Magdalen-lane almshouses, and they have the power to view and examine the tenements to which they have a right to present. Further particulars respecting the endowments may be found in the parish books, from tablets in the church, and from the printed rules with which each inmate is supplied. There are also two tenements in Paul-street, to which they have the right to nominate. There are eight tenements in Holway-lane, which were formerly the property of the churchwardens and overseers of the parish of St. Mary Magalene, and of which the constables had the patronage; but the auditor of the Poor-law Board having disallowed payments made by the overseers for the repair of these tenements, the overseers put them up for sale by auction in August, 1860, when they were purchased by the feoffees, who have since retained the whole control of the property.

### 5th.—The Constables' Feast.

It has been the custom for many years past for the constables to provide a public dinner annually out of the proceeds of the market scales and the sum of £18 paid to the portreeves by the Trustees of the Taunton Markets,

the retiring constables being elected portreeves for the year following. The question as to the propriety of thus expending these funds has been raised on many occasions, and it has been suggested that it would be more appropriate to lay out the same for charitable purposes; but it is understood that it has been found that the constables have no choice in the matter. The custom has probably arisen from the usual practice of the steward of the lord providing entertainment to the lord's tenants upon audit-court or rent-days. The dinner has usually been held about the early part of November, at one of the principal inns or public halls in the town. The number of gentlemen who have responded to the invitations has varied from eighty to one hundred and twenty. The cost, including wine and waiters, has been about 10s. 6d. each. Music is usually provided, either gratuitously, or by arrangements made with a band, choir, or glee-singers, accompanied on a pianoforte, &c. The bailiffs, as chief officers, have generally been asked to preside. The constables take the vice-chair, and the portreeves the centre.

### Taunton Priory.

There are probably few subjects of greater interest in the history of our town than the one which we now propose considering, especially when we reflect what a priory was in mediæval times. Now, we are accustomed to look upon it as an interesting ruin, which at one time was inhabited by a set of men who, although they professed works of charity and meekness, forgot to practice these Christian duties, and were far oftener noted for their grasping love of power, wealth and earthly affections.

But we should not forget that although this charge may be laid against many of the ecclesiastics of the middle ages, some were men of great learning and piety, and reflected honour on their respective communities, and that the priories and monasteries were almost entirely the seats of learning, charity, and the fine arts—that poetry, painting, architecture, and music are each indebted to the fostering care of the prior and abbot during the dark ages.

There appears to be little doubt that a priory existed in this town during the Norman period, although we know but few particulars regarding this building or its inhabitants. It was probably allowed to fall into decay, and at present its very site is doubtful.

If we take a walk towards the north-east district of the town, we pass through Canon-street, so named from many of the houses having been the property of the canons who occupied the adjacent building. We next come to "Priory Gate," formerly the entrance to an

establishment famed throughout England. Proceeding into the fields we observe numerous ditches, trenches and hillocks. These, we may be informed, are the remains of fortifications thrown up at the siege of Taunton; but they mark the spot where once stood a magnificent church and a noble priory, with all the numerous buildings and appendages usually connected with it. At present, with the exception of the barn, scarcely a wreck remains—the very stones removed, and the foundations actually ploughed up.

History informs us that between the years A.D. 1110 and 1120 William Gifford or Gyfforde, Bishop of Winchester and Chancellor of England, here commenced building a priory, for some time quite a modest edifice; but Henry de Blois, the second abbot, fully carried out the ideas at first so simply commenced. As he was brother to King Stephen, he soon obtained that celebrity which he sought, and before long Taunton Priory became a noted and wealthy establishment. It was occupied by Augustine canons, and was dedicated to the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul. Locke says that it soon became powerful by the assistance of Court patronage, and the nominating of the priests of the surrounding parishes. Bishop's Lydeard, Angersleigh, and Pitminster were the first, and most of the others followed.

They also held that portion of St. James's parish in the town to the parish of West Monkton, bounded on the north by the river Tone, and all the chapels in the town of Taunton. When a vacancy occurred in any of the livings of the neighbouring parishes, either from death or incapacity, a priest or canon was appointed by the prior to the office. It was about the year 1277 that the magnificent church was erected, which was a long time in building, money being raised by the sale of indulgences, &c. So time passed on, generally quietly and peacefully, until the year 1331, when some disturbance took place, and, blood having been shed, a commission was appointed, with instructions to wash with holy water and otherwise cleanse the conventual church.

In A.D. 1334 Edward III. granted a charter, which gave great privileges and rights to the Priory.

In the year 1444 the revenues amounted to nearly £150 yearly—a very large sum in those days, when labour was about a penny a day. Shortly previous to the Reformation a considerable addition was made to their property by the annexation of Stavordale monastery, their total income being now above four hundred pounds. The prior was one of the great men of the country; he was often summoned to assist in important duties of Government, and in ecclesiastical meetings, and possessed almost unlimited local power.

Many disputes arose at various times respecting the navigation and care of the river Tone, and several lawsuits appear to have arisen in consequence.

We must not omit specifying the dress and appearance of the brethren. They were called black canons, from their wearing a long black cloak and hood and black cap. They wore a leather girdle around their waists, and, as they allowed their beards to grow, presented at once a venerable and commanding appearance.

A curious proceeding is recorded to have taken place which shews the despotic laws of the church in those days. It appears that certain parishioners of West Monkton, who lived near the town, found it nearer and more convenient to attend the conventual or town churches; but precepts from the bishop ordered them to attend their own parish church under pains and penalties, &c.

However much we may regret the destruction of the beautiful priories and many noble churches at the time of the Reformation, we cannot but rejoice in the wide-spread of truth and civil and religious liberty, the glory of our native land and the envy of the world.

Further particulars of Taunton Priory may be gathered from the proceedings of the Archaeological Society, the History of Taunton, and many ancient papers and documents published by the Rev. T. Hugo.

### The Taunton College or Grammar School.

Among the various buildings which adorned ancient Taunton few were of more importance than the Grammar School. Founded at a time when learning and the arts and sciences were confined to small circles, it was of the utmost consequence that each town should possess a seat of instruction, especially when is remembered the difficulty of travelling experienced in past days. Taunton having been for about a thousand years past a place of note in the western counties, we naturally expect to find provision made for the education of its rising population. Nor shall we be disappointed. Religion and education in those days generally went hand in hand, and we are indebted to Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, for the foundation and establishment of the present edifice.

This learned and good bishop was a great man in his day, and held important offices in the Church and State. He built a college at Oxford, and several other schools beside the one in this town. Although Taunton College was founded in the year 1522, it was not endowed for more than twenty years afterwards, when William Walbee

gave certain moneys to be expended in land, the rents of which were to be paid towards "a stipend for the maintenance of the schoolmaster," and trustees were appointed to undertake the management of these funds. The college is situated near the Castle, on the south-west side of "The Green." It is a substantial stone building, standing a little above the surrounding properties. The school-room is of noble proportions, with three large Gothic Hamhill stone windows, suitable benches, and a coved oak roof. Adjoining is the master's residence, built in the same style, and, although much defaced by modern "improvements," it contains a fine dormitory with an open oak Gothic roof, which has been lately restored. There is a small quantity of land attached to the residence.

Men of some celebrity have held the honourable office of master. Among them we would notice several authors, namely, Upton, Bond, Hurley, and others. Many a gentleman of this town and neighbourhood who in after years proved himself an honour to his country received his early education within the walls of our venerable college. The old desks and walls still, as at Eton, Harrow, &c., bear their rudely-carved names.

Certain fines on the tenants of the lands were to be levied, which were to go towards the support and maintenance of the buildings.

The appointment of the master is in the nomination of the warden of the New College, Oxford, for ever. Over the eastern doorway of the school are the arms of the founder, Richard Fox, namely, a pelican feeding her young, also the date 1522, carved in Hamdon-hill stone and in good preservation. The education given at the college is principally classical, although mathematics and other branches are included, the religious teaching being of course that of the Church of England. There is room for some discussion as to the class of pupils which were intended to be taken, many persons maintaining that the school was founded and endowed for the education of children in poor circumstances.

The college having been neglected and the pupils having fallen off, about 15 years ago the Rev. F. J. Smith, of this town, very generously undertook its restoration and re-establishment. A new head master was appointed, a house provided for the second master, a large play-ground obtained, and the premises were repaired and improved throughout.

An examination of the pupils takes place yearly at Midsummer, and on the 29th of September public rehearsals are given, and the prizes awarded at Midsummer examination are presented in the presence of the pupils' relatives and friends. There are several annual exhibitions, besides the "Bishop's prize."

Several new properties having been purchased and added, a new wing was erected in the year 1860 for the accommodation of the increasing number of pupils.

Taunton old Grammar School or College deserves our veneration for its antiquity, our regard for its high and useful purpose, and our esteem for the many associations connected with it.

In 1870 the school was removed to new and enlarged buildings, lately erected for the purpose on the Chard road, at a cost (including the grounds) of above £16,500. The present number of pupils, including 23 boarders, is 75. The terms are—for day scholars about ten guineas; for boarders, from £60 to £70. Although the education imparted at the Taunton College is doubtless of a high class, it is certain that the investment does not at present seem likely to be remunerative to the promoters—probably the high charges may be the cause. We should be glad to hail the day when its prospects look brighter.

### Church of St. Mary Magdalene.

From the remains of ancient foundations there appears reason to believe that a church existed here at a very early period, probably during the eighth century. Previous to the fourteenth century there was a small chapel on the site of the present church, which was served by a priest from Taunton Priory. Many persons consider that the north aisle was the chapel above referred to, and this seems probable from the following circumstances:—The architecture is certainly of an older period, the arches were lower, and the pillars are devoid of the sculptured cherubs, forming capitals to the other columns. Many of the windows of this aisle contained beautiful stained glass. The consistory or archdeacon's court, an ancient institution, was formerly held at the western end; and, lastly, during the repairs about 30 years ago, a quantity of black Church-text letters, apparently the Ten Commandments, were found written on the stucco at each side of the eastern window of this aisle—probably the site of the high altar.

The present beautiful edifice was erected at various periods, principally towards the end of the fifteenth century, as appears from a date over the south porch, and also from the fact of the initials "R. B.," said to be those of Richard Beere, abbot of Glastonbury, and considered by many the builder of the tower, these letters having been placed on one of the south windows of the old tower. Some think that the "R. B." refers to Reginald Bray, architect, &c., fifteenth century. Tradition says that the carved heads on either side of the springings of the chancel arches represent Henry VII. and Bishop Stephen Langdon.

St. Mary's Church, in the centre of the town, is a magnificent building, and is a fine example of Perpendicular architecture; it is spacious, and will seat about 1,500 persons. The tower is the admiration of all beholders; the lightness and beauty of its lofty pinnacles and battlements are very unusual. It contains an excellent peal of eight bells, clock, and chimes. The new tower (which is a *fac-simile* of the old) was built between the years 1858 and 1862; its total height is 163 feet. The church contains the rare number of five aisles, of which that on the north is the oldest, and was probably built in Early English days. The organ is of great power and sweetness, and stands in the north transept. The old organ case contained rich carvings by the celebrated Grindling Gibbons, and which are now in the possession of the writer of these lines. The old tower screen and pulpit were fine specimens of the carvings and design of the 17th and 18th centuries; but as they were of an architecture foreign to the building, they were removed in the year 1844, when the church was restored by the vicar at that time (the Rev. Dr. Cottle), and the churchwardens (Messrs. Cox, Easton, and Jeboult). The parish register dates from 1558. The living is a vicarage, annual value £350, with residence, in the gift of the Church Patronage Society; it is endowed with £600 royal bounty, and £600 private benefaction. The area of St. Mary's parish is 1,206 acres.

Though there have been several histories published of the church, as we do not remember ever having seen the *peculiarities* of this beautiful building pointed out, we propose to do so now, as far as our humble ideas will permit us; for we have often observed that among the various text-books on Gothic architecture little notice is taken of St. Mary's, of Taunton, and we account for this from the fact of there being such a large number of fine perpendicular Gothic churches in this county.

We observe, first, the extreme beauty and grace of its noble tower, crowned with four magnificent open crocketed pinnacles, challenging competition for lightness and skill of design. One remarkable feature is the effect of the constant repetition of the three very simple architectural designs of the arch, the pinnacle, and the quatrefoil.

Second—The church contains the unusual number of five aisles, there being, we believe, but two other examples in this country. There are few churches of the extent of St. Mary's that are seated throughout; and a stranger may well be struck with the sight of such a church, crowded as it often is with an intellectual and well-dressed congregation.

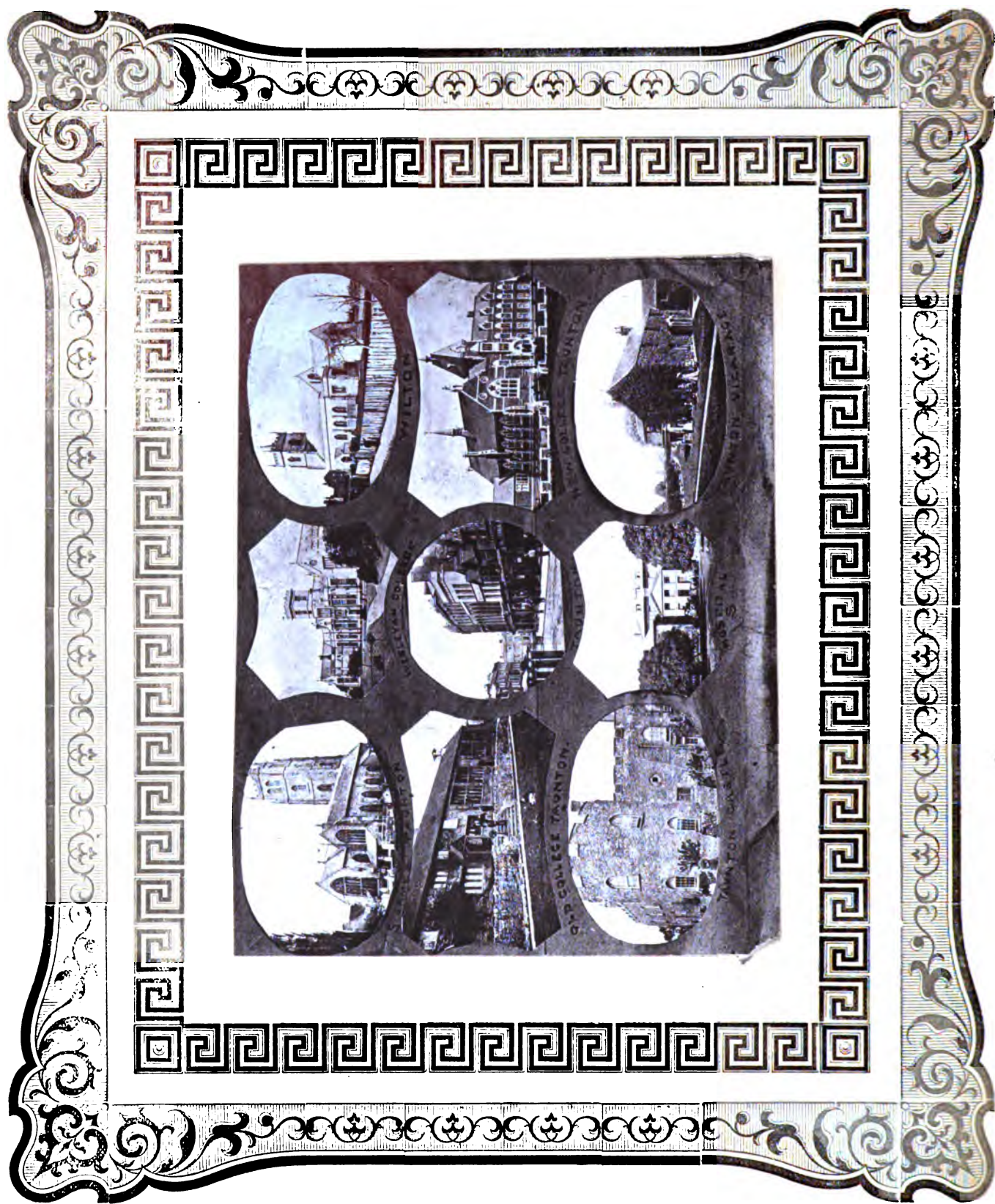
Third—The next point to be noticed is the lightness and beauty of the clerestory windows (or windows above the











centre aisle) with the delicacy of the pinnacled canopies between, and the richness of the carved oak roof above.

Fourth—The parvise, or sanctum sanctorum, as the room over the south porch is called. This was erected for the domestic use of a priest who served the Church. During the restoration, a few years ago, a small window was found which gave a view of the church from this room.

Fifth—The hagioscope, or squint, which is of unusual size and beauty, is an ornamental, open kind of window on the north side, between the north aisle, and the adjoining chantry, or transept, and was placed there to allow the congregation of the north aisle to see the elevation of the Host at the high altar in Roman Catholic times.

Sixth—The spandrils over the western or tower entrance are particularly noticeable, being with the groined ceiling and the copper vanes the ornamental portions of the old tower that have been preserved. They now form very striking objects, though for a long time they were entirely hidden from view by thick coats of colouring. They were brought to light by Mr. C. E. Giles while engaged in the restoration of this doorway some years ago, and he has given in the "Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological Society" a very interesting and probably correct explanation of the scene which the carvings are intended to represent.

Seventh—The absence of any ancient brasses or old tombs seems singular; but if the church formerly contained any, they were probably destroyed at the Reformation.

Eighth—The beautiful canopied column on the north side of the centre aisle doubtless at one time held in its recess a carved figure, either of the patron saint, St. Mary Magdalene, or of the Virgin Mary.

Ninth—A window on the south side, a sketch of which is given in several books of Gothic examples, contains very singular tracery, the mullions running up through the head.

Tenth—There were formerly as many as seven chantries, founded by pious persons, which were attached to the church. These services were discontinued at the time of the Reformation.

Few churches have undergone more alterations than St. Mary's. The extensive restoration by the late Dr. Cottle and the churchwardens, about 30 years ago, must be fresh in the minds of many.

Since that time the tower has been rebuilt, at a cost of eight thousand pounds, the niches filled in with finely-carved statues, the chimes restored, the organ remodelled, and placed in a better position, and a beautiful western window added to the tower. Did time permit we might

go on and describe the valuable sacramental plate, the beautiful altar screen, the graceful font, and the various internal decorations, which, together, adorn this noble building, of which Tauntonians, and especially Churchmen, may be justly proud.

The beautiful manner in which the services are conducted by the present vicar (the Rev. Prebendary Clark) cannot fail to strike the attention of all visitors. In 1870 the chancel and arches were raised, a new altar screen was erected and other improvements made through the liberality of John Marshall, Esq., Dr. Edward Liddon, and other parishioners. St. Mary's Church and parish will now bear comparison with any other, far or near.

### St. James's Church, Taunton.

St. James's Church and Tower, though not equal in extent and magnificence to St. Mary's, is, nevertheless, a fine building, and a very fair example of the "Perpendicular" churches so numerous in this county, which tradition says were built by Henry VII., as a reward for the loyalty of Somerset to the House of York. This building is more ancient than St. Mary's, and was probably built about the 14th century. The tower is of noble proportions. On the south side are beautifully-carved figures, said to be those of St. James the greater, and St. James the less—some say St. Peter and St. Paul (the patron saints of the Priory), and others consider them to be St. John and St. James. The lofty position of these figures probably saved them from destruction at the time when similar ones at St. Mary's, nearer the ground, were destroyed.

St. James's Church contains but few notable points; but first of these we would mention the beautifully-carved ancient font, lately restored—a fine example of the architecture of the period. It is of light soft stone, octagonal in shape, with figures of apostles and martyrs in each panel.

The pulpit is of far later date, and is evidently of the age of the Stuarts, but has undergone many alterations, and is now fixed upon a high and unsuitable pedestal, to give the preacher a view of the congregation in the unsightly galleries.

The piscina on the western side of the altar was for many years covered up with old boarding, but was restored some years ago.

The tower contained a musical peal of five bells, on each of which is the date of the casting, and a short sentence expressive of their being dedicated to God's service.

There was formerly a row of small windows over the middle aisle, but, being of little use, and of no great beauty, they were destroyed many years ago.

There was, at one time, a finely-carved oak screen in St. James's Church; but it was removed some considerable time ago, and is said to have been sold for three pounds, and fixed in an adjoining house!

A few years since the writer of these pages rescued these fine old carvings, and sent some of them to the Somersetshire Museum. Portions of the crucifix on the churchyard cross may also be seen there.

It was at this church that on Sunday, the 11th of May, 1645 (when the Rev. Thomas Welman was in the midst of his sermon), news was brought of the relief of Taunton from the siege from which it was then suffering. The preacher recalled the people who were rushing from the church, and requested them to wait whilst public thanks were offered to the Almighty for the deliverance.

Charitable bequests to the poor and for other similar purposes were formerly very numerous in this parish; but many have been lost, and few now survive.

Previous to the Reformation it was the custom to relieve the aged and infirm poor, as well as the necessitous travellers, at the gate of the Priory. After the destruction of this building, and consequently the loss of the charity, a yearly grant was allowed by the Government to the poor as a compensation.

In this parish there were no church-rates, and consequently no annual disputes on the subject. The rents from certain parish lands provide a sufficient sum to defray the ordinary expenses usually charged and paid by rate.

The oldest church now in existence is St. James's, on the north side of the town; it was erected in the time of the Tudor kings. The living is a perpetual curacy; annual value £240, with residence. St. James's for many years was considered the conventual church; but the researches of antiquarians have proved it otherwise. There are some monuments deserving of notice in this church and yard. The presentation is in the hands of the widow of the late incumbent, Dr. Cottle. The area of St. James's parish is 1,350 acres.

A few years since the churchyard was improved and enlarged, and it is now a fine, open, pleasant place, adjoining the meadows and river Tone. Considerable alterations were made in the church about thirty years ago by the Rev. James Cottle, who was then the incumbent. The galleries were then erected, and a re-arrangement was made of the seats; but a much further alteration of the pews was effected about ten years ago.

A new and beautiful organ, which has proved a great acquisition to the church, has lately been erected by public subscription. The old organ, which was small and of inferior power, was presented by Frederick Corfield,

Esq., in the year 1812. This gentleman was a liberal friend to St. James's parish, for he not only spent a considerable amount on the church, but sank a sum of £800, the interest of which provided for the expense of Divine service on every Sunday afternoon. A beautifully-stained glass window has lately been put in over the altar to the memory of members of the Liddon family. Would that this custom of giving such windows was more general!

In the year 1863 attention was directed to the insecure state of the external masonry, and the ornamental stonework of the beautiful old tower, and upon closer examination it was found that the whole building was in a worse state than was generally believed. Architects were called in, who gave their opinion that it was capable of restoration, though at a great cost. An attempt was made, and after spending about £700 one buttress was rebuilt, and the tower comfortably "caged" throughout. Seven years were occupied in these operations; then it was decided to pull off the head of the poor old victim, but how much more "deponent sayeth not." He only hopes he may live long enough to see it restored to health and strength.

The present incumbent of St. James's is the Rev. W. T. Redfern. A list of previous incumbents may be found in Savage's History of Taunton.

### St. George's Church, Wilton.

It seems that formerly no portion of the parish of Wilton was considered to belong to the town of Taunton, for neither Dr. Toulmin nor Savage makes any mention of this place beyond the fact that it was a Chapel of Ease to St. Mary Magdalene's, and together with the adjoining village of Trull was served by a priest from the Priory. The church appears to have been a very unpretending building, and was probably erected about the same time as St. Mary's, during the prevalence of the later styles of Gothic architecture, although the old tower, from its appearance, was of a much earlier date; in fact, it had much the look of a Saxon or Norman building. The church consists of nave, chancel, and north and south aisles, and contains nothing particularly noticeable. It was dedicated to St. George, the patron saint of England, and was probably over or near the anciently well-known healing spring called the Fons George.

Considerable improvements have been made in this church since our recollection, it having been cleansed of whitewash, neatly pewed, well lighted with gas, and a new beautifully-designed stained glass memorial window placed at the east end to the memory of Sir Benjamin Hammet, formerly M.P. for Taunton and an inhabitant of this parish.

A few years ago the churchyard was greatly enlarged, and it is now suited to the requirements of the parish. The tower was rebuilt about ten years since, and gives a picturesque feature to the neighbourhood. Schools are also established, so that Wilton is now quite a different place from what it was twenty years ago.

The parish register dates from 1558. The living is a perpetual curacy, and the annual value £124, in the gift of Dr. Kinglake.

Through the exertions of the churchwardens, Edwards Beadon, Esq., and H. J. Badcock, Esq., assisted by handsome subscriptions from various subscribers, also from members of the Marshall family (resident at Belmont), the church has just undergone very considerable improvement and restoration, upwards of six hundred pounds having been spent.

The Rev. J. W. Spencer is the present incumbent.

### The Church of Holy Trinity.

In the year 1842 the south-east portion of St. Mary's parish was formed into a new district, and the above-named church erected by subscription. The Rev. F. J. Smith was the first incumbent, and a most liberal patron of this district, for soon after his appointment he erected at his own expense the excellent school-buildings adjoining, and presented a splendid organ, at once a credit to the makers and honour to the donor. He also caused the church to be tastefully supplied with gas-fittings, besides making many other improvements.

Unfortunately the church was erected before the revival of Gothic architecture, and has consequently a very stiff and formal appearance. The tower, which is about 90 feet in height, stands upon high ground, and is, therefore, a prominent feature in the landscape.

An extensive crypt is built under the church, although few interments have taken place since the formation of the cemetery. A few years ago a large clock, with dial, was subscribed for and placed in the tower, and is of great service to the neighbourhood. A single bell invites the congregation to prayer. An arrangement was formerly made, by which the inmates of the Union workhouse, which is near, entered the church by a separate door and staircase to attend the services.

The district, having lately come of age, is now declared an independent parish. A proposal made to collect a church-rate proved ineffectual.

Trinity Church was consecrated June 18, 1842. It contains 1,300 sittings, half of which are free. The living is a perpetual curacy, annual value £150, in the gift of the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

The present incumbent is the Rev. W. Du Sautoy.

### The new Church of St. John the Evangelist.

Last, but not least, of the beautiful churches of Taunton comes that of St. John, which was erected in the year 1862 by the liberality of the Rev. F. J. Smith, in the parish of Bishop's Hull, and in the west end of this town. We knew not which to admire most, the munificence of the founder or the beauty of the architectural design. It was planned by the celebrated church architect, Gilbert Scott, Esq., and certainly reflects credit on his good taste, as well as the skill of the builder, Mr. Henry Davis. It consists of nave and north and south aisle, with a tower, open to the church at the east end of the south aisle. This open space in the tower is occupied by the very noble organ, which was purchased by public subscription among the inhabitants of the town and presented to the worthy incumbent as a testimony of esteem and regard.

The spire is of noble proportions, nearly 200 feet in height, and well worthy its place in connection with this beautiful building. The interior of the church is richly varied in colour by a skilful mixture of various stone, Hamdon Hill, Bath and Bishop's Lydeard blending well together. The seats are open benches, of pitch pine. The gas-fittings deserve notice from their singular beauty and suitability. The altar screen is richly carved and decorated. The pulpit is a gem, and the same may be said of the font. The exterior of the western end presents a handsome façade, of three high-pitched gables, and the whole appearance of the church and spire is unique.

The style of the church is the Early English or Transitional. It contains 700 sittings, all free. It is a fine monument of the liberality of its founder.

### The Roman Catholic Church.

The old Roman Catholic Chapel of St. George is situated in the Crescent, and is now let for other purposes, the vaults being a repository of *ardent*, instead of *departed*, spirits. The new church of St. George is erected at the south end of Billet-street, upon high ground, and when the spire is complete will be one of the most commanding objects in the view of Taunton. This beautiful church was built in the year 1862, in the Gothic style, chiefly through the exertions of the present priest, the Rev. Canon Mitchell, whose new and excellent residence adjoins the church. The services are performed in the usually attractive and showy manner that characterises the Roman Catholic Church, and which tell so powerfully upon the senses.



### Paul's Chapel.

The first Nonconforming chapel in this town was built in Paul-street by the Independents, about the year 1662. During the confusion that followed the civil wars much damage was done to this building. The seats and galleries were destroyed, and an attempt was made to turn the place into a workhouse; but order being restored A.D. 1687, two ministers were chosen, and the various services and interments have never since been interrupted.

In the year 1797 the old building, being in an unsound state, was pulled down, and the present meeting-house erected in its place. It is a very large building, fitted on three sides with heavy galleries, and evidently intended more for use than ornament.

The congregation is numerous, active and influential. The schools are well attended (as indeed seem all the others in the town), and although a large portion of the sect left on the foundation of North-street Chapel there seem to be no empty pews.

This meeting-house appears to be the centre of the district, as large numbers of the neighbouring ministers here meet at stated times. Extensive school-buildings and lecture-rooms have lately been erected to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the ejection of the Nonconformist ministers from the Church of England, in the year 1662, by the Act of Uniformity.

The chapel is endowed with about £90 a-year. This endowment has been the cause of several disputes as to the appointment or continuance of the minister and the government of the chapel generally.

### St. Mary Street Chapel.

About the year 1670 an edifice was erected in St. Mary-street by the Baptists, who were then becoming a numerous sect. This building was in existence until the year 1721, when it was taken down, and the present one erected by the Unitarian body. This contains two handsomely-carved oak Corinthian pillars, which, with the pulpit and other furniture, deserve notice.

Upon the demolition of their chapel the few remaining Baptists joined a new sect of Calvinistic Baptists which had just been formed in this town, and which afterwards built a chapel in Silver-street.

The Unitarians have lately much improved their chapel, and have erected some good school-buildings. They have been noted for the literary character and ability of their various pastors.

### The Friends' Meeting House.

As early as the year 1693 the Quakers were a well-known and persecuted body of Christians, and they erected a

chapel in a narrow roadway called Hunt's-court, the land being presented by one of the members, named Robert Button.

This building was consistent with their usual modest style; but old Time showed as little regard to it as to the other meeting-houses in this town, and in the year 1814 it was found necessary to rebuild it. There was a burial-ground attached to the chapel, and also an extra mural one at the junction of the Bridgwater and Langport roads, one mile to the east of Taunton. We believe the Society now numbers but a very few followers.

### The Octagon Chapel.

This building has, as its name denotes, eight sides, and stands in Middle-street. It was erected through the exertions of that celebrated revivalist, John Wesley, after he left the Church of England. It is a very unpretending erection, and has seen many changes, passing from one sect to another, according as their numbers and funds rose or fell.

### The Tancred Street Meeting House.

In the year 1732 a number of persons left the Paul-street congregation, formed an independent body, and erected a chapel, which they called "The New Meeting-house," in Tancred-street; but in the year 1815 the chapel was pulled down, and the worshippers joined the Baptists in Silver-street. The graveyard remained in a very neglected state until about ten years since, when the ground was sold for trade purposes.

### The Temple, Upper High Street.

We next come to the chapel built by the noted James Lackington, in the year 1806, who five years afterwards sold it to the Wesleyans, who by this time had become far too numerous for their small chapel in Middle-street. It was a large square building, without any pretence of beauty until the year 1840, when a considerable sum was subscribed, and great additions and improvements were made. New and commodious schools were also built, and a Gothic front and side towers, containing staircases, were added. The Wesleyans are now a highly respectable and influential body, and have extensive schools and missions, and doubtless effect much good. In the year 1868 still greater improvements and alterations were made at this chapel, at a very considerable expenditure, and it is now a credit to the town. About twenty-five years ago the Wesleyans erected a new chapel in Victoria-street, at the eastern end of the town, for that portion of their flock who lived in that locality.



This chapel was greatly improved a few years since, and now presents a very creditable appearance. A school is also attached.

### The Calvinistic Baptist Chapel

Is situated in Silver-street, and was erected in the year 1815, previous to which time the congregation met at a private house in East-street. This sect, as their name denotes, hold peculiar ideas regarding baptism, contending for the necessity of immersion. In this town they are a respectable and influential body. There are several other Baptist Chapels in the neighbouring villages. The Silver-street Chapel was a fine specimen of the style in vogue at the early part of this century. An attempt was made about 10 years ago to give it a more suitable appearance. Attached is a burial-ground, and baptistry, together with large school buildings, which on Sundays are well filled with scholars. Considerable additions and alterations have lately been made, so that the present chapel is more in accordance with the times and its requirements.

The next place of worship as regards age we have to consider will be the

### Independent Chapel, North Street.

This is a large and important building, with extensive schools and lecture-rooms. It was erected in the year 1842, the congregation being an off-shoot from Paul's Meeting. The chapel is built in the Gothic style, with a high pitched gable towards the street. It is fitted with large galleries on all sides but the East. The chapel was erected on the site of a well-known carrier's yard, where formerly a considerable trade was carried on. The congregation is large and influential; the schools, Bible classes, and lectures are in a flourishing condition, and testify to the care and attention of the members of this sect.

### The Bible Christians' Chapel.

About twenty-five years ago the Brianites, or Bible Christians, established themselves in Taunton, and afterwards fitted up a private house at the south end of Canon-street as a place of worship. They appear a zealous and well-meaning set of people, but they are not numerous in this town.

### The Plymouth Brethren.

This sect was at one time much before the public, although at the present we hear very little of its proceedings. For some years Brethren occupied the Octagon Chapel, and although holding peculiar views the body is generally well read in religious and controversial subjects.

### Taunton Almshouses, Charities, &c.

According to the parish records and other sources, Taunton has at various times had numerous charities, almshouses and free gifts very liberally bestowed upon it; but unfortunately, from various causes, many of these are not now in existence. The greater part of those which have been handed down to the present age originated about the beginning of the seventeenth century.

It would be an interesting subject for an antiquarian to trace out all the various charities of this town, and to see if some that are now apparently lost could not be again restored. Some have lapsed from the smallness of the gift, others from fraud and negligence; many have been perverted from their original design, and probably nearly all have at some time been used for political or improper purposes.

In the year 1787 a return of the various charitable donations of each parish was ordered to be made by Parliament, but many had been lost long previous to that time. An account of those in existence may be seen in Savage's "History of Taunton."

In 1869 a Commissioner received evidence at Taunton respecting the charities, reported in the *Somerset County Gazette*, February, 1869, from which report much of the following information is derived.

#### SAUNDERS' CHARITY.

In 1591 Simon Saunders gave £100 to the poor of Taunton, the interest of which was to be annually divided. Christopher Saunders, his brother, added £33. These sums were invested in butchers' shambles, and the whole were purchased by the trustees of the markets for £30, and produced but thirty shillings a-year.

In 1869 the property consisted of £105 Consols, and produced three guineas per year, expended in flannel to the second poor.

#### STRINGLAND'S CHARITY.

In 1681 Robert Taylor, William Gill, and others granted the profit of "Stringland's," which under six different surrenders consisted of thirteen acres of land and several tenements, to the poor; and seven trustees were appointed. In 1787 this charity yielded £30 a-year, and in 1796 £79 a-year.

It was stated before the Commissioner in 1869 that the land was now 14a. 3r. 30p. (near the Union workhouse), and was let for £70 10s. per year. Mr. C. H. Cornish kept the accounts.

#### BLAKE'S CHARITY.

The property consisted of £100, 3 per cent. Consols (accounts produced). The receipts for the past year were £122 4s. 7d.—balance, £48 14s. 7d.; rent of land, £70 10s.; Blake's dividend, £3. The expenditure was—ordinary

expenses (including quit-rent £2 14s. 3d.); £8 18s. 7d.; extraordinary repairs and alterations at Pope's almshouses, £44 17s. 6d.; leaving a balance of £65 8s. 6d. (besides Blake's £3), distributed to the poor of St. Mary's, retaining a balance in hand for repairs. Last year £40 was distributed, leaving £25 8s. 6d. The "poor" were men and women not in receipt of parochial relief, and they received sums of 5s., 7s. 6d., and 10s. Blake's £3 was given, as a matter of course, to the inmates of Pope's almshouses, in equal proportions, in tea, sugar, coffee and coal. As regarded the £40, the trustees printed forms of recommendation, which were given to any applicant. The trustees met five or six times a year—always once. Prior to examining the recommendations, the list was submitted to the relieving-officer of the Union, to strike out the names of those persons who had had parochial pay and those who did not belong to St. Mary's. The parish was divided into districts, and the trustees or members of their family made the payments. There were no deeds of Pope's almshouses, and it was unendowed except by Blake's Charity. The occupants were eighteen women, not at the time of appointment in receipt of parochial relief, and upwards of 60 years of age; and these received yearly 10s. out of Stringland's Charity on the 1st January. The almshouses were in fair repair.

#### ROBERT GREY'S ALMSHOUSES.

We propose giving but an epitome, and will commence with an account of the endowed almshouses, of which there are but two in Taunton—Grey's, in East-street, and Huish's, in Church-street.

Grey's almshouses are situated on the south side of East Gate, and contain seventeen apartments, a chapel and school-room. They were erected in the year 1635 by Robert Grey, a Taunton man, who was a prosperous London merchant, and who left £2,000, the rents or interest of which were to pay the current expenses.

A large monument to the memory of the said Robert Grey may be seen on the north side of St. Mary's Church. It consists of a life-size figure of the good old man, dressed as an alderman. The inscription is curious, which we annex:—

"Sacred to the blessed memory of Robert Grey, Esq.

Taunton bore him, London bred him,  
Piety trained him, Virtue led him;  
Earth enrich'd him, Heaven cares't him,  
Taunton blest him, London blest him;  
This thankful town, that mindful city,  
Share his piety, and his pity.  
What he gave, and how he gave it,  
Ask the poor, and you shall have it.  
Gentle reader, Heaven may strike  
Thy tender heart to do the like.  
And now thy eyes have read the story,  
Give him the praise and Heaven the glory.  
Ætatis sue 65. Anno Domini 1635."

The property consisted of the almshouses, in a fair state of repair inside. The outside was being repaired as the funds came in. There were there ten women and six men, also a reader and his wife. The men and women had one room each. The gross freehold rental was £61 19s. 4d.; copyhold of the Manor of Taunton Deane (small fines and nominal rent), £24. There were £3,000 New Three per Cent., producing £90, and £334 11s. 8d. Three per Cent. Consols, producing £10 0s. 8d.—total, £186 per annum. The premises were in fair condition, and the land in very good condition. Formerly the land was let by tender; but having a good tenant they had just renewed the seven years' lease. Last year's account showed a balance from 1867, £78 18s. 6d.; rents, £81 11s. 9d., dividends, £100 0s. 8d.—£260 10s. 11d. Expenditure—general outgoings (including insurance and rates), £7 12s. 3d.; repairs of almshouses and cottages, £16 9s. 9d.; extraordinary repairs—coats of arms restored, &c., £14 6s. 7d.; almspeople (3s. a-week each, and reader 6s.), £138 11s.; balance in hand, £83 11s. 4d.

Pugsley's copyhold land let at £24 per year.

#### ST. MARY MAGDALENE PARISH CHARITIES.

There was a charity founded by Geo. Hooper in 1620, two and a half acres of land in or near Pyrland, for the religious poor of the parish of St. Mary's. There appeared to be no trace of rent paid since 1802. Mrs. Yea in 1821 paid £15 to the parish of St. James's, but did not admit herself liable for a similar sum to St. Mary's.

#### REYNOLDS' CHARITY

Consists of three acres of land at Holway, let at £17 per year, given to the sick.

#### THOMPSON'S CHARITY

Was but 10s. annually, to be distributed in bread.

#### TROWBRIDGE'S CHARITY.

The property consisted of two pieces of land in the parish of West Monkton—one let to Messrs. French for £15, and the other to Mr. Hardwill for £5 5s. For the year ended 21st December, 1868, that was the receipt. £2 was given to the churchwardens of St. James, and the churchwardens of St. Mary's distributed £15 in single shillings to the poor at the church on St. Thomas's day, after service.

#### SIR GEORGE FAREWELL'S CHARITY

Was 16s. per year, derived from land at Bishop's Hull.

#### MOGGRIDGE'S CHARITY,

Five pounds yearly from land at Bishop's Hull.

#### CANON-STREET CHARITY,

£10 per year rent-charge on a house formerly occupied by Mr. H. D. King. This charity was founded in the time of James II. It was called Canon-street almshouses.

## RICHARD HUISH'S CHARITY.

Huish's almshouses were situated on the south side of Great Church-lane, formerly the main street to St. Mary's Church. The entrance from Fore-street was between Fouracre's and Beadon's, and afterwards from an archway on the north side of Hammet-street. They were nearly 100 feet in length, and contained thirteen separate rooms and a chapel. They were erected in the year 1615 by Mr. Richard Huish, during his lifetime, who laid down very strict rules respecting the future government of the inmates. He also provided them with a livery, and directed them to attend the various services at St. Mary's Church, sitting near his grave, &c., &c. The clergyman of the parish was to instruct them at least once a quarter in the church. Prayers were ordered to be read every day at their own chapel when they did not attend St. Mary's Church. Soon after Mr. Huish had established his almshouses and set matters on a satisfactory footing he died. The funds for the support of the establishment were to be derived from certain properties in London. In the Great Fire of 1666 the houses were burnt down, and for some years there were no proceeds; but in consequence of the advantageous position of the land, the rents afterwards considerably increased in value, and additions have at various times been made to the weekly allowance of the inmates. Although soon after the re-erection of the property a cloud seems to have passed over this now prosperous charity—for the number of inmates was reduced from 13 to 3, and the parishes of St. Mary's and St. James's expended above £100 in putting the almshouses in repair—the allowance was increased in 1820 from £20 to £30 annually to each. Huish also founded five scholarships at Oxford for persons of his own name.

In the list of charitable donations published in 1787 the following occurs:—"Richard Huish, of Taunton, gave by will, for clothing and maintaining thirteen poor men in the parish of St. Mary's, Taunton, certain property, the clear annual value of which amounts to £141, duly vested in trustees."

The trustees have lately pulled down the old buildings and sold the land. They have erected new almshouses on the south side of Church-street, in good taste.

The following evidence was given before the Commissioner in 1869, by the steward, R. G. Badcock, Esq.:-

There were now twenty trustees—twenty-two being the full complement—selected as far as might be from the old families named in the original deed, irrespective of their living within ten miles of Taunton. All the lands were now freehold, and vested in the Official Trustees of Charity Lands. The trustees would like a scheme for

filling up vacancies in their body. The quorum was now seven, but they always found a difficulty in forming a quorum, owing to the trustees living at such a distance. It would be a great convenience to reduce the quorum to five. It used to be nine. They met twice a-year regularly, but latterly more frequently, in consequence of the new building. Witness, as steward, received £21 a-year. His London agents collected the rents and paid them to witness's bankers, Ransome and Co. The houses in St. Ann's, Blackfriars, let altogether for £321 10s.; dividends in Consols, £762 19s. 6d., producing £22 6s. 4d.; also £13,127 12s. 7d., in the name of the Accountant General, producing, less income-tax, £393 19s. 8d.; also £323 0s. 3d. lately purchased on investment of surplus, producing, including income-tax, £9 9s., making a total of £737 5s. The £762 19s. 6d. Consols formed the proceeds of a house in Blackfriars, sold to the Metropolitan Board of Works, under their Act, after notice to the Charity Commissioners. The £13,127 12s. 7d. was the proceeds of sale of houses, also in St. Ann's, Blackfriars, to the London, Chatham and Dover Railway, under verdict of the Rolls Court. The £323 was chiefly made up of part of the proceeds of sale of old almshouses, £400. The residue of the £400 formed part of the London banker's balance. A sum of money put aside for repairs, £500 or £600, interest from London, Chatham and Dover Railway, with sale of old almshouses, made up the £2,887 5s. 5d. (including £800 land), cost of the new buildings, which were commenced in 1866, and were all now finished. The buildings were of the most substantial character, the plans having been approved by the Commissioners. There were thirteen rooms for single men, a common room and a kitchen. Prayers were read in the common room by the president or reader, one of the inmates. He was elected by trustees, and approved by the Rev. J. Huish, of Clysthdon, near Collumpton, representative of the founder. The almspeople were taken from the parish of Taunton St. Mary or Taunton St. James, in one of which parishes they must have lived seven years. They must be over sixty years of age, and not in the receipt of parochial relief. The account for 1863 was produced, and showed receipts—balance in hand, 11s. 3d.; rents and dividends from London bankers, £740 16s. The disbursements included part payment towards six scholarships at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, £120; expenditure at almshouses, £590 9s. 6d.; balance in hands of steward, £30 7s. 3d. The reader got 7s. a-week, other inmates 5s.; the matron 5s. and a gratuity of £2. Two of the scholars were of the founder's kin. They were elected by the trustees, and when there was a vacancy advertisements were placed in the newspapers in Devon

and Somerset, from which counties the scholars not of founder's kin must come.

A further examination of the will showed that the charge was £108 for the almshouses, £100 for scholars, with power to the trustees, in default of appointment, to apply any surplus as they might think fit.

#### CURTIS'S CHARITY.

The property of this charity, founded 1809, consisted of £263 Consols. The dividend, £7 10s., was distributed as the minister and churchwardens might think proper. Formerly it was given away in small sums of money; but latterly it was given to the St. James's School, now under Government inspection.

#### ST. JAMES'S ALMSHOUSES.

There was also a small charity connected with the poorhouse in St. James's-street. The almshouse consisted of eight tenements. The occupants were seven single women and one married couple, of 60 years and upwards, belonging to the parish. The tenements formerly belonged to the old Priory. The selection was subject to a check by the churchwardens.

#### ST. JAMES'S—STONE'S CHARITY

In 1869 consisted of £69 13s. 4d., in Three per Cents. The proceeds, £2 1s. 7d., were given to the inmates of St. James's Almshouses, in 6s. sums, on the 24th December, for a Christmas dinner. There is no other almshouse in James's parish.

#### ST. JAMES'S SCHOOL.

The site was formerly that of the rectory. The site and the school were conveyed, 16th February, 1861, to the Official Trustees of Charities, the lord of the manor waiving his claims. It was entirely a Church of England school. The income for 1868 was £119 7s. 9d., including £48 from Government, £7 10s. from Curtis's Charity, £8 8s. subscriptions, and £28 6d. 9d. collected at church. The Government Inspector's report was satisfactory. A day school was held at a hired room at Rowbarton, supported by voluntary subscriptions. The room was also used as a chapel of ease. A Sunday School was held at both places.

#### JOAN KING'S GIFT

Is £2 per year, given in sixpences by Mr. Benson, of Greenway.

#### RESDON'S GIFT.

A charge of 36 shillings per year on land at Pyrland.

#### TROWBRIDGE'S CHARITY.

The churchwardens of St. Mary's pay £2 per year.

#### MOGGRIDGE'S CHARITY.

£5 10s., (less 11s. for land-tax), at present paid by Mr. William Easton.

#### REYNOLDS' CHARITY.

This, amounting to £8 6s. 4d. last year, was passed to the general charity fund. The will bequeathed, in moieties to the parish of St. Mary and St. James, the proceeds of land at Holway, to be distributed by the churchwardens. The money was received directly from the churchwardens of St. Mary's.

#### GEO. HOOPER'S CHARITY.

Mr. Symons, of Dorchester forwarded £2 10s. yearly to the churchwardens. The charity was charged on land at Pyrland, now belonging to the Yea family.

#### FLORENCE STONE'S GIFT.

This lady by her will, dated 1613, directed £20 to be laid out in land to provide £20 a-year to be distributed by the churchwardens to the poor. The money was now paid by Mr. Edwards Beadon.

#### SIR GEORGE FAREWELL'S GIFT.

This was a sum of 8s. paid yearly by Mr. Edward Bryant, of Rough Moor Farm, Bishop's Hull, to the churchwardens, who passed it, like the others, to the general charity fund.

The whole amount of the charities of St. James's parish amounted in 1869 to £20 17s. 4d., paid to 240 poor persons, whose names are entered in a book.

#### ST. JAMES'S CHURCH ESTATE.

Thomas Berry's property, consisting of a house and garden in St. James's, was sold for £300, and the money invested in £317 9s. 2d. Consols, in the names of the Official Trustees of Charitable Funds. £8 a-year was the previous rental, which came into hand in the year up to Easter, 1868. It went towards the service of the church, chiefly for repairs.

There was also £7 a-year received from Mr. John Petherick, rent of a field at Hope Corner, containing about an acre and a half.

The churchwardens likewise received £22 gross from Mr. Clift, rent of a field called Ladymead, in the parish of Kington. Also £2 13s. from Mr. G. Poole, of Bath, rent of land called Grass Grove, in St. James's parish.

The £39 13s. received from the Church Estate was passed to the account of the general service of the church, which was supplemented by pew-rents and fees. No church-rate had been made for a quarter of a century.

There is no hope that St. James's will get a portion of the charities of St. Mary's.

#### ST. MARY'S CENTRAL NATIONAL SCHOOLS, CHURCH-SQUARE.

The school was founded in 1838 with a gift of site. In July, 1857, there was an endowment of £100, by Walter Clift, representing £109 Consols, and producing £3 5s. 5d. The schools were since vested in the Official Trustees of Charitable Funds.

In the year ended 31st December, 1868, the subscriptions were £58; the church collections, £33; the capitation and special grants, £159; Clift's dividend and other items making a total of £280 18s. 4d., which was expended on the schools. There were on the books 147 boys, 72 girls, and 198 infants. Her Majesty's Inspector reported very favourably of the school. The charge for the children was from 1d. to 3d. per head. There were good school-rooms and master's residence; but residences for the two mistresses were still required, at a cost of about £500. Suitable property adjoining was offered for sale.

#### CAREY'S GIFT.

This charity was founded by Peter Martin Carey, of Taunton St. James, who 30 or 40 years ago gave in trust £1,000 shares of the Bank of North America, the proceeds to be distributed in coals amongst the poor of the parish. This bank failed, and paid nothing in the pound. The Carey family thereupon came forward and invested under a deed £1,000 in Consols for the same purpose. There was a power of revocation in the deed for the purpose of varying the trust. The coal was distributed in amounts of 5 cwt. each, for five successive weeks, generally in February.

#### TEMPLE CHAPEL AND SCHOOLS.

Mrs. Savage left a certain sum for preaching two sermons. It was invested in the Boroughbridge Trust, and nothing came of it; but the two sermons were still preached.

#### BRITISH SCHOOLS, SOUTH-STREET.

In February, 1869, the following was stated before the Commissioners:—That the first deed of release, dated 24th November, 1838, placing land, on which had been erected schools and master's and mistress's house, under trustees, with power of new appointment. There were rooms for boys, girls and infants, and the schools were under Government inspection, and received Government grant. The premises would accommodate 300 children, and the average attendance was 280, of all denominations. The Inspector reported last year that the schools were efficiently conducted.

#### NORTH-STREET SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

These were, perhaps, the most complete Sunday School premises in the West of England. There were 24 separate class-rooms, and three large rooms for boys, girls and infants. They were in connection with the Independent Chapel, North-street. The average attendance was 600. This school was for children of all denominations, and was created and supported by voluntary subscriptions.

#### CADÉ'S CHARITY.

This charity belonged to the parish of Wilton. James Cade, in 1809, bequeathed house and premises to trustees,

the proceeds to be given to four deserving poor persons of the parish. The two acting trustees were Mr. R. M. King and Mr. W. Blake. The trust property was now a house in East-street, occupied by Mr. Daniel. The proceeds, £32 a-year, were given to four persons not in receipt of parish relief, at the rate of 2s. 6d. per week. Account produced for 1868 showed £9 extraordinary repairs, new roof. List of recipients produced. Two of them were relatives of the donor.

#### PAUL'S MEETING.

Mr. John Clitsome left two sums, amounting together to £1,048 12s. Consols, now standing in the names of Messrs. Clitsome, C. Musgrave, J. C. Musgrave, and J. H. Horsey. Part of the proceeds were distributed by the trustees amongst the poor of the congregation in bread and meat, and a part went towards the support of the minister.

#### MARY-STREET CHAPEL.

The minister of this chapel, formerly Baptist, received emoluments from endowments, chiefly the property of the old Presbyterian Chapel in Tancred-street, which was united with the Mary-street congregation. The Presbyterian premises were sold, and the premises applied to the Mary-street chapel. Mr. R. K. M. King was treasurer and trustee. The value of the endowment was about £110 a-year; and probably included Elizabeth Moore's charity, the property lately consisting of £337, Bank Annuities.

#### THE TOWN LANDS, MEREDITH'S AND OTHER CHARITIES.

The following evidence was given before the Commissioner who attended at Taunton in 1869 (the whole will be found fully reported in the *Somerset County Gazette* of February 20, in that year.):—

By a decree of 3rd George II. (1729), in the *Attorney-General v. Aroher and Others*, it appears that there were lands in St. James's, St. Mary Ottery, and Upottery, and the rents were to be employed for the use of the poor of the town. Three parts thereof had been long distributed to the poor of the town and borough, being paid over for that purpose to the town constables by the feoffees. The decree recited another of 24th October, 10th James I., under which 22 feoffees were appointed, six gentlemen living out of the town and 16 in the town. These had the distribution of the remaining fourth. The rents were not to be spent in pastimes, feasts of the gentry, nor to ease the townsmen's purses, nor to relieve the poor or maimed soldiers. Three-fourths were to be employed by the constables for the use of the poor of the town and borough, and one-fourth for charitable uses, such as poor maid's marriages, loans to tradesmen, or otherwise, as the trustees might think fit. It was soon found that the loan charity did no good, and a decree was obtained to vary the



trusts. John Meredith left £400 for the poor of St. Mary Magdalene, the proceeds of which the constables alone had to deal with. Where the gifts were confined to the old town and borough there would be no difficulty in extending it. Meredith's money was to be laid out in land, and the rents the constables were to lay out in clothing and distributed on St. Thomas's day, accounting to the trustees. Thus the trusts of the charity stood according to a decree of the 23rd May, 4th James II., and the money was laid out in the purchase of Grass Croft and Grass Grove. Mary Ackland left £100 for the purchase of a cottage, garden and grass croft, and the rent was to be given to the poor of the borough by the constables "and other masters of the town" (the bailiffs and portreeves). In 1864 Miss Harriet Badcock gave £1,000, the proceeds to be for the benefit of the occupants of the almshouses in Magdalene-lane, to share and share alike. £900 was subsequently transferred to the Official Trustees of Charitable Funds. There were 13 tenants in Magdalene-lane, two in Paul-street, and four houses in Holway-lane, not mentioned in the deeds, and supposed to have been purchased out of the surplus income.

These freehold estates were now vested in the official trustees. The feoffees met annually on the 21st December (St. Thomas's day), when they appointed a committee, who met six or eight times a-year, as required. They were about eleven in number, and three were considered to be a quorum. For some years past the custom had been for the committee to present reports at the annual meeting. The constables, bailiffs and portreeves received the money to which they were entitled on the 1st December annually, and the application by constables of their share was accounted for at the annual meeting. The stewards' accounts were audited prior to that day (21st December) by two of the committee, and presented to the meeting. The portreeves and bailiffs furnished no accounts to the feoffees. The feoffees' proportion—one-fourth of proceeds of town lands—appeared at the annual meeting as a balance in the hands of the stewards. Immediately afterwards it was distributed according to tickets sent in by the feoffees (form of feoffee note produced). The money was paid to the poor of the town and borough. The ticket was signed by eight trustees, and each feoffee got one note, varying from 10s. to a guinea of late, and filled up the ticket with the name of his nominee or nominees. The value this next year would perhaps be one guinea. The recipients did not sign any receipt. The intention was that no person should obtain money from more than one feoffee in a year.

Property of the charities produce a gross rental of £181. Meredith's produced £162 gross receipts in 1868, Ackland's

£40. In former days all the town lands were let on terms of 99 years, on three lives. The fine for renewal used to be two years' full value, and only a small rent was reserved. In later years more accurate calculations were made, on lives as well as on improved annual value, an actuary having been consulted. The system of renewing was discontinued by Act of Parliament in 1853, since which time only two or three renewals, sanctioned by the Charity Commissioners, had been granted. Five separate tenements had fallen into hand since 1850, and had been re-let at a rack rent. The aggregate rack rents now amounted to £179 10s.

The income of the town lands would gradually increase. According to a calculation made by the stewards the present income was £181 11s. 6d. The following leases would fall in:—In 1878, £127; 1883, £357 15s.; 1888, £283 10s.; 1893, £250; 1898, £697; 1903, £170 10s.; 1908, £198 10s.; making the total value in that far future £2,265 16s. 6d., exclusive of quit-rents. These now amounted to £46 6s. 6d., and would of course diminish gradually as the leases fell in.

All except Ackland's was unquestionably freehold, and of that no surrender had taken place since 1713, so that it was considered freehold. The five houses in Magdalene-lane and two cottages in Paul-street did not appear in their deeds, nor did the four houses in Holway-lane (or South-street), derived from Mr. Hammett, which were surrendered in 1806. On this last property no rent was paid to the lord of the manor. Eight other tenements in Holway-lane were purchased from the parish in 1860, with the sanction of the Poor-law Board, for £175. The five houses in Magdalene-lane contained four tenements of two rooms each. The houses in Paul-street were in good condition. Originally there were 13 houses occupied by nominees of the constables, but repaired by the trustees. On the feoffees in 1845 rebuilding the houses, then in ruins, it was agreed that the constables should take twelve tenements and the feoffees the rest. The cost of the building was about £1,650, and they were erected out of £484 19s. 7d. Consols, which were sold at 97½ths, £279 5s. 6d. Reduced, invested proceeds of previous sales, and current income. Since 1846 the feoffees had appointed to eight of the tenements and the constables to twelve. The cottages in Paul-street each contained two rooms, &c., to which the constables appointed. The feoffees repaired. The constables appointed to the original four houses in South-street, and the feoffees to the others. These four houses contained eight rooms, occupied in 1868 by seven persons—two vacancies; the eight houses contained 19 rooms, with 22 inmates and one vacancy. Since then other vacancies had occurred, but



none had been filled up, it being desired to clear the premises, as being ruinous.

In 1846 rules were drawn up for the admission of inmates of the Magdalene-lane almshouses. The inmates must attend some place of worship twice every Sunday, unless reasonably hindered; must be over 60 years of age and have a legal settlement in the parish, but not in receipt of parochial relief. The only endowment was Miss Badcock's. Each tenement under that got 6d. a-week, paid quarterly, and 1s. a-year. At present they occasionally got money from the other charities, not as a matter of right. The rules for the houses in Holway-lane, drawn up in 1861, were nearly the same as for the other houses; but the inmates might belong to any part of the borough. They must not on appointment be in receipt of parochial relief. They got no charity money. Nearly all were in receipt of parochial relief. It was supposed that four or five of the inmates in the Magdalene-lane houses had also pay from the parish. Nothing was paid to the inmates of Paul-street as a rule, but they might benefit in common with other poor by the general charities. The receipts were—Town lands (including £14 5s. 4d. balance of rents), £243 11s. 3d.; Meredith's, £162; Ackland's, £40; Badcock's, £26 19s. 11d. Taking the town lands money, the balance, £14 5s. 4d., was the feoffees' one-fourth, distributed in twenty-two notes, of 13s. each; £93 6s. 9d. was repairs to property in hand and almshouses; £10 3s. were expenses attending enclosure of waste land at Upottery. The constables' share was £67 3s. 7d., and the feoffees £22 7s. 9d., which was immediately distributed, forming the first item in the next account. The other three charities were appropriated as above described.

The constables received in 1868, town lands, £67 3s. 3d. They gave notice by handbills that printed recommendations could be obtained of them. The recommendations were returned, and the nominees—the poor generally of the town and borough—attended in the Guildhall about the 15th December and obtained sums from 2s. to 5s. each, irrespective of their being in receipt of parochial relief. The clothing of Meredith, £162, was given away in the same way, restricted to the poor of the parish of St. Mary's. It consisted of coats and cloaks (worth about 14s. each). Ackland's £12 12s. 7d. was given to the widows of the town and borough, of all ages, in sums of 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. each. The bailiffs and portreeves distributed their £12 10s. in the same way. The constables took a printed receipt from each recipient of money under the town lands.

The constables' dinner took place when they liked, generally once a-year. It was not paid for out of any of these charities.

#### THOMAS POYNTING'S CHARITY.

Thomas Poynting by will dated 1732 left £200 for augmenting the vicarage, and, if less, for buying books. Other property, after his wife's death, should go to augment the vicarage, and provide a curate, a sermon being preached on Thursday afternoons, "on some useful subject."

The living of St. Mary's was not augmented, and no books were bought, according to the first provision. The property consisted of a freehold house in High-street, let yearly for £32, and a copyhold orchard, &c., at Wilton, leased for seven years, at £7 10s., subject to a small quit-rent. The sermon was preached regularly on Thursday afternoons.

#### POPE'S AND GRAY'S ALMSHOUSES.

The trustees of Stringland's charity, having £85 in hand, wished to purchase iron bedsteads and mattresses for the eighteen almsmen at Pope's.

A portion of Gray's property was copyhold. The lord of the manor had offered to enfranchise this on payment of one year's rent, and this would bring the outlay to about £40.

The cost of enfranchising Stringland's and Pope's almshouses would be about £105.

The trustees could not afford to increase the weekly stipend, but they would like to be able to add £1 or so each about Christmas.

The Commissioner promised to provide the trustees with a scheme. He wanted to put all the charities of St. Mary's under the control of one Board of Trustees.

The trustees of Stringland's would be quite willing to apply the proceeds, £70 10s., to endow Pope's almshouses.

#### SPURWAY'S CHARITY.

Lucilla Maria Spurway, by will dated December, 1858, gave to the poor of the parish of Wilton £100, to be vested in the minister and churchwardens. The money was invested in Consols, now standing in the names of John Ward Spencer, Edwards Beadon and John Stephens (deceased). The dividends had only been regularly received owing to the sum being small. There had been only one distribution in small doles amongst the poor of the parish. The balance in trustees' hands was £14 19s.

#### GIFTS TO THE HOSPITAL.

By Mrs. Blake, dividends of £500, devoted to the general purposes of that institution; Mrs. Jenkyns, proceeds of £100, to purchase Common Prayer-books to be distributed there by the chaplain; Rev. F. J. Smith, the rent of property, £30 per annum, originally given for the benefit of the Taunton College School on condition of the Church Catechism being there taught. In October, 1868,

in default of the fulfilment of this condition (Dissenters having been admitted as pupils) the £30 was lost to the school and became the property of the hospital.

The Commissioner then made a list of the five charities under the control of the vicar and churchwardens (already reported on), and drew up a provisional scheme for the parish, excluding Graye's. The trustees should consist of the vicar, three churchwardens, and the following trustees within seven miles:—C. H. Cornish, G. B. Cornish, F. Lake, C. Lake, P. Taylor, R. Symes, old trustees, and four others—E. Beadon, T. Meyler, H. Alford, and H. Liddon. Trustees to fill vacancies subject to sanction of Board, who would give due notice in the town. The freeholds would be vested in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands. Half-yearly meetings the first Wednesday after Lady-day and Christmas. Power to be given to trustees to apply as many of the dole charities as they might think fit towards the endowment of Pope's Alms-houses. A distributive clause would enable them to give clothing, coal, or in special cases money, to the deserving poor, but so as not to relieve the poor-rates.

The trustees of Graye's Alms-houses were also advised to apply for a scheme for that property, it being kept under separate control, so as to avoid certain legal difficulties.

#### A BOARD FOR ST. JAMES'S.

The Commissioner next drew up a provisional scheme for St. James's parish charities (excluding the church estate, the schools, and Carey's coal fund) similar to that above noted for St. Mary's.

The following particulars respecting the alms-houses and charities are extracted from papers published in the year 1866 by the writer of these lines, and gathered chiefly from the existing histories. It will be observed that some have not yet been noticed:—

#### MAGDALENE-LANE ALMSHOUSES.

In an account of the charities of the parish of St. Mary's, entered in the parish records in the year 1671, it is stated "that time out of mind there has been a row of seventeen alms-houses in Little Magdalene-lane, which have been repaired by the feoffees, and that the high constables have had the right of presentation."

In the best of times these houses were but poorly built, and age had rendered them so dilapidated that about twenty years ago it was determined to take them down and erect more convenient and ornamental buildings in their stead. They now afford comfortable dwellings to the poor and aged, and adorn a useful thoroughfare towards the church and Post-office. The nomination is divided between the feoffees and the high constables.

#### ALMSHOUSES IN PAUL-STREET.

There are two houses about half way up the above street, on the western side, that appear to have been originally erected and maintained in a similar way to those described above, but of which the constables possess the sole right of nomination.

#### ALMSHOUSES IN ST. JAMES'S-STREET.

At the south-east corner of the above street is a row of small houses of considerable antiquity. They are said to have been intended for the second poor. From their situation adjoining the Priory Gate, they probably were either founded by or belonged to Taunton Priory.

#### CHARITABLE BEQUESTS.

To give full particulars respecting all the various gifts and charities left to the poor of this town would be of little interest to our readers, as so many of them are now lost. Persons who desire to get more information are referred to the parish documents, the Parliamentary list of parochial charities, or to Savage's History of Taunton. We propose to briefly enumerate them; and if in doing so we can induce some one with time and talent to investigate the possibility of their restoration, our trouble will not be lost.

In 1624 Thomas Trowbridge bequeathed the rents of six acres of land in West Monkton to be given on St. Thomas's-day.

In 1622 Sir George Farewell gave the profits of seven and a half acres of land to be distributed to the poor at Christmas.

In 1626 Mrs. Margaret Aekland bequeathed £100, the interest to be yearly divided among poor widows.

In 1645 Mr. Robert Moggridge granted out of the proceeds of his lands at Bishop's Hull the sum of £5 10s., to be annually given to the "honest and religious poor."

In 1667 Robert Meredith willed that the interest of £400 should be yearly expended in coats and cloaks, &c., &c., given to the poor on St. Thomas's day.

In 1694 Sir Hugh Parker gave the sum of £5 annually from the rents of property in London, to be distributed in bread, &c.

In the same year Mr. Phillip Gadd willed that £3 10s. should be yearly paid out of certain lands in Holway tything.

In 1694 Mr. Samuel Reynolds ordered that half the rent of a three-acre meadow at Holway should be given to the poor.

In the same year Mrs. Mary Cornish gave the profits of a meadow to be annually divided among the poor.

In 1693 Archibald Thompson gave 10s. annually, and Bernard Smith 2s., to be expended in bread.

In 1710 Simon Stacey bequeathed the interest of £70 to the poor of this town.

About the same time Sir Wm. Portman ordered the interest of £90 to be annually expended in apprenticing poor children.

According to an extract from the Constables' book of 1647 it appears that the following sums were by charitable persons appropriated as loans to poor tradesmen:—Mr. Perry, £40; Mr. Colward, £40; Mr. Bowerman, £10; Thos. Pope, £10; the Parson of Calverley, £3; H. Roster, £20; Roger Warre's servant, £20; Mr. Every, £40; Lord Popham, £20; Mr. Barbor, £20; Mr. Matthews, £30; Mr. Wyndham, £10; Mrs. Portman, £22; Thomas Symons, £10; Williams Symons, £10; and Mr. Tagg, £50.

It was formerly the custom for the Constables to distribute loaves of bread to all poor householders. The funds came from the town lands. Nor were these charities and bequests confined to the parish of St. Mary's, as the following list relating to St. James's parish will prove:—1645, Robert Moggridge gave £4 annually; 1619, Thomas Trowbridge, £2; Joan King, £2; Sir George Hooper, £2 10s.; Mr. Warman, £2 10s.; in 1638, Florence Stone, £1; in 1690, Samuel Reynolds, £3 10s.; in 1622, George Farewell, 8s.; in 1787 Mrs. Risdon gave land, which produced £1 15s.; — Grabham, £4 10s.

It was occasionally the custom of persons to give certain annual sums towards the relief of the poor:—John Slape gave £5 15s.; Mr. Clarke, £3 10s.; Sir John Warre, £1. During severe weather sums of money were sometimes granted by the Mayor, when the town possessed a Corporation. There were probably many other sums, of which little or nothing is now known. These charities, it will be observed, were given previous to the extension of the Poor-Law Act. Since that time we presume that the payment of poor-rates is considered more than an equivalent.

#### ALMSHOUSES

Are situated at the corner of East Gate and Silver-street, and consist of fourteen separate rooms, which tradition says were originally founded by Mrs. Grace Portman, who left an estate in Cornwall for their endowment. These houses were much injured at the siege of Taunton, the greater part being burnt by Lord

Goring. They were afterwards rebuilt by a person of the name of Pope, and are now called after him.

There formerly stood opposite the western entrance of the church of St. Mary Magdalene a row of almshouses consisting of eighteen separate rooms. They were founded by Dorothy Henley, A.D. 1637, and were said to have been originally endowed with the rents of certain lands in Bishop's Hull, called "Henley's Barn," and other property at Ash Priors, also called "Henley's." The same coat of arms was formerly to be seen at each place. The presentation lay with the representatives and heirs of the Henley family. From the loss of these funds the property got into a bad state of repair, and the overseers of the poor placed a number of paupers in the almshouses, whose dirty habits caused a nuisance to the neighbourhood.

In the year 1788, £100 being needed to make the place tenantable, Sir Benjamin Hammet, by the consent of the parish, expended more than the above sum in fitting up appropriate premises in Holway-lane, suitable for a larger number of poor people. The old almshouses were then removed to make room for the proposed new street, called after the name of the founder.

In the year 1860, the auditor of the Poor-Law Board having disallowed the payments made by the overseers towards the repair of the eight almshouses in Holway-lane, the parish officers offered them for sale. They were purchased by the feoffees of the town charities, and the right of nomination passed from the hands of the High Constables to those of the said feoffees.

There are some other charities, endowments and bequests of which we have heard; but, as far as we remember, they are not mentioned in these papers. For instance, the master's residence and part stipend of the old College School; Corfield's gift of £800 to support the second service at St. James's Church, the Government grant to St. James's parish in lieu of the old Priory dole (as mentioned in Savage's History); the £18 per year paid to the High Constables by the Trustees of the markets in lieu of their ancient rights of weighing, &c.; and there are probably many more. It is surely time that a properly-qualified and appointed board was established to see that all receive attention and justice.

### The Election of Members of Parliament for the Borough of Taunton.

The act of voting for the representatives of the people is a sacred right which ought to be highly prized and carefully guarded. It was not obtained without considerable difficulty, and various laws have been made and passed to prevent an infringement of its privileges. By foreigners it is looked upon as the great preservative of the liberty of the subject, and the preventative of oppression and wrong.

Mezeray, the great historian of France, thus wrote to Hampden, the champion of English liberty—"Think nothing too dear to maintain the precious advantages of electing your own representatives, who shall make your own laws, spend your own money, and cause your own King to govern according to just laws. And if there be occasion, venture your life, your estate, and all that you have, rather than lose this glorious privilege."

An old writer, who paid a visit to this country several centuries ago, thus speaks of the election of members of Parliament:—

"The towns of England enjoy the advantage of returning the representatives of the people, which gives them an importance that other towns are destitute of elsewhere."

This subject ought to be peculiarly interesting to Tauntonians when they remember that probably one of the first Parliaments, or gathering of the chiefs to assist the King, was held in this very town; for A.D. 702 Ina, King of the West Saxons, a man of great wisdom and piety, summoned his bishops, "aldermen," and other men of experience and probity, to meet him at his new palace—the Castle of Taunton.

Here were laid down the foundations of many of those good and just laws which have been preserved to us through Magna Charta and other occasions down to the present time.

It appears from history that Taunton has returned two members ever since the formation of Parliament; and a town that has been held in such high estimation in the West has found men of talent to represent its interests in a worthy manner. It will be remembered that the ancient writs directed that the burgesses should elect from among themselves two men of discretion and wisdom; and it was not until a late reign (we believe that of Anne) that strangers were admitted to this privilege. It must be borne in mind that although many of the great and county families resided at their own Courts or Castles in the country, most of them had a residence in the neigh-

bouring town. Many of these houses are yet standing, and we have on previous occasions pointed out those of the Portmans, the Lethbridges, and others.

In looking over the list of members for this borough, which we possess in an uninterrupted course for the past four centuries, we constantly notice the names of Taunton men, and also those of neighbouring county families, among which we would mention those of Speke, Portman, Wyndham, Sanford, Warre, Lethbridge, Elton, Pynsent, Popham, &c. Nor are the names of eminent professional traders and merchants absent, for there is a constant occurrence of the Webbs, Roberts, Hammetts, Trenchards, Hallidays, &c., &c.

The old borough was very limited, and was not a twentieth part of the extent of the new; but although the size was small, the number of votes was far larger in proportion, for "household suffrage" was the rule, but manhood suffrage seemed to be the practice as far as possible.

In the middle ages a large number of persons were dependent either on their lords or on the alms of the churches, or monasteries, &c., and consequently their food was prepared for them. It does not appear that the law provided a vote for these persons; but all householders who "boiled their own pot" were entitled to the privilege, and were consequently called potwollers or potwallers, from the ancient Saxon word "wealan"—to boil.

Numerous attempts to obtain votes were constantly resorted to previous to an election. Men would start their own fire and boil their pot, even in the streets.

Strangers, who were non-residents, were imported, and asserted their rights. Minors were even pressed into the service, not forgetting apprentices and almshouses; so that occasionally upon a strict scrutiny one half the votes were objected to.

In these "good old times," when the poll lasted from four to six weeks (sometimes for 14 hours each day), drunkenness was rife, and such scenes took place as were a disgrace to a civilised land. Hogarth's pictures give a good idea of the times. The terms Whig and Tory had then a meaning, and party spirit ran high indeed. The working classes got into such bad habits as unfitted them for industrial pursuits; and, as no work was done, orders were neglected, and the town lost the most important of all its trades, namely, the manufacture of woollens and serges, which had been successfully carried on at Taunton for many generations, and had added much to the prosperity and fame of the town.

The duty of receiving the votes and making a just return was no small matter, and was performed by various officers.



At the time the town had a Corporation it fell upon the Mayor, and at other times successively upon the bailiffs, the constables and the portreeves. Nor was the duty an easy one, for we are informed that on several occasions the losing party indicted the returning-officer, and one time he escaped imprisonment by a mere chance.

Many a good tale was formerly told in this borough of the numerous practical jokes, electioneering dodges and petty manoeuvres that were carried on "when George the Third was King." And many an old potwaller living could "keep the table in a roar" by recounting tales which would now be looked upon as a romance. We well remember when a boy that the house was pointed out to us where a man claimed a vote because the corner of his chimney was in the old borough, and once a year he would sleep with his head in this corner. The dispute occupied three days before it was settled.

But the time approached when the Reform Bill of 1830 should sweep away many of these inconveniences and wrongs, and by the formation of the barristers' court and the reconstitution of the right of voting shorten the time and make easy the work of the returning officer.

The votes of the potwallers were perpetuated for life, so long as they remained in the old borough; but the list of these electioneering worthies every year becomes "smaller by degrees and beautifully less." It is now reduced to about forty.

An extension of the franchise appeared desirable, and the old system seems just, of giving a vote to all men who pay taxes; but at the same time we believe that intellect and property must not be forgotten, and that this may be met by a plurality of votes, according to a man's position and standing, as is in use in the parish elections or those of the Board of Health. And surely the franchise ought to be extended beyond the favoured few who reside in ancient boroughs, and all ratepayers of intelligence and standing, either in town or country, should have a voice in the choice of the representatives to spend the public money they subscribe. This may be met by "electoral districts," and the great anomaly of a deserted place, with three to four hundred voters, returning the same number of members as a populous town of perhaps one hundred thousand population would be prevented.

An additional member may be added to rapidly-increasing cities according to the amount of income-tax which is paid.

Some such arrangement as the one we have briefly endeavoured to sketch would also wash away the foul disgrace of bribery, with which many of our small boroughs are afflicted, and which has the effect of sending rich rather than wise members to the House of Commons.

Moderate and thoughtful men, of whatever party, admit these evils, and generally agree in the main as to their remedy.

While we maintain much respect for the wisdom and experience of the past, and veneration for old customs—especially household or manhood suffrage, and of the election of residents who know our wants, are acquainted with our wishes, and answerable to the electors for their votes and conduct—we cannot forget that it is the Liberal system of reforming the corrupt, and the Conservative system of maintaining the good, that have made this country the most prosperous of nations—the happiest of kingdoms, and the most free, enlightened and Christian people on the face of the earth.

In Savage's History of Taunton we can see an account of all the members who have represented this town from the year 1409 to that of 1820; but as many of them were men of no celebrity, we propose only to notice such as have "left unto themselves a name" or have been particularly connected with the town.

Taunton returned members to Parliament 150 years before the time to which we have referred, for by reference to Prynn, Brown, Willis and others we find that in the year 1295, which was the 23rd of the reign of Edward the First, the king summoned a Parliament to meet at Westminster, and that writs were issued for the election of "two knights for each shire, two citizens for each city, and two burgesses for each borough;" and this appears to be the first regular summons of knights, citizens and burgesses to Parliament.

The introduction of merchants and traders into the government of this country was for the purpose of enabling the king to increase the taxation; and it laid the foundation of much of the commercial greatness of this country.

It would appear to have been the custom to elect the Mayor of the town as one representative, and the other from among those county families who either resided or had property and influence in the borough.

We observe that the Portmans were burgesses of Taunton so early as the year 1414, and that A.D. 1421 Walter Portman was elected its representative.

Much looseness and irregularity was formerly shown in the method of serving the writs, which were directed to the sheriff of the county, with instructions to send one to each city, borough, &c., without mentioning the names of such towns; and this will account for many small places returning two members. It often happened that towns accustomed to return members had no writ supplied to them, and consequently no members were returned. It also frequently occurred that the king directed the sheriff as to whom he should return as members for the various places.

It will be remembered that the members received a small payment in return for their services and for the expenses of travelling. But as they were bound to provide sureties for their appearance in Parliament, there was not much competition for the honour of having M.P. affixed to their names.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth this town was represented by Valentine Dale, LL.D., and by William Aubrey, LL.D., from which it would appear that the clergy then sat in the House.

In the reign of Charles I. two more members of the Portman family represented this borough, and during the interregnum the renowned Blake, the "Defender of Taunton," was the member. Then followed George and Wyndham, elected through the instrumentality of the Crown immediately after the restoration.

In 1690 was the first Parliament of William III. Messrs. Clarke and Speke were the members who were favourable to the views of the revolution. Speke was of the Ilminster family, who suffered much from their political views; Clarke was the intimate friend of the great philosopher Locke, and represented this town for seven Parliaments. His descendants are yet respected inhabitants of this borough.

In 1698 Portman and Hobart opposed the above; but Portman and Clarke were elected. At the dissolution of Parliament by the death of Queen Anne and the accession of George I. a most violent election took place, the kingdom being much divided in politics and factions.

The numbers as returned by the Mayor were—

Sir Francis Warre .. .. .	637
Henry Portman .. .. .	636
William Pynsent .. .. .	381
James Smith .. .. .	381

The two latter presented a petition complaining of the partiality of the returning-officer in admitting many to vote who were disqualified, whereby the votes were raised from about six hundred to nearly one thousand; also the refusal of the Mayor to allow a scrutiny, though demanded by Pynsent. The petitioners objected to the following:—

Minors and apprentices .. ..	36
Alms-men .. .. .	35
Out-livers .. .. .	198
Not housekeepers .. .. .	107
Charity men .. .. .	129
Total .. .. .	500

After very considerable discussion they proved their case, and the House decreed that "Pynsent and Smith were the duly elected members." It was this Parliament that altered the elections from triennial to septennial periods.

At the election of 1722 the following was the return made by the Mayor:—

Trenchard .. .. .	432
Smith .. .. .	432
Dean .. .. .	295
Earle .. .. .	289

A petition was presented, which stated that 260 of Trenchard's and Smith's voters were disqualified and 66 voters ought to be added to Dean and Earle; but as the petition was not followed up, the members kept their seats.

Trenchard was a man of first-class ability, and became a leading member in the House, but died in 1722, when the Mayor presented Earle as the successful candidate, and the Bailiffs returned Dean. The Sheriff of the County accepted the return from the Mayor.

In George the II.'s reign the Portmans and Spekes were again the favourites, and were accordingly elected members. The elections of 1727 and 1734 passed off quietly in consequence of an arrangement between the heads of the two parties. But at the general election of 1741 political war was again declared, and raged as strongly as ever; and at its close Sir John Chapman, of London, and John Buck, a merchant of Bideford, were duly returned.

Peace again reigned until the year 1754, when John Carpenter and John Halliday were elected; but the latter dying before he had taken his seat a most violent contest ensued, which lasted upwards of six months. The public-houses being kept open the whole time, enormous sums of money were improperly spent, bad habits were contracted, trade injured, and such strife ensued that much blood was spent and several lives were lost before the election terminated.

The candidates for the vacant seat were Sir John Pole, of Shute, and Robert Maxwell (afterwards Earl of Farnham), who was duly returned.

In 1748 the contest lay between Lord Farnham and Lord Thomond conjointly, and Edward Willes, Solicitor-General, and Alexander Popham, a descendant of the celebrated Lord Chief Justice. But as the two lords were disgusted with the conduct of some of their managers they retired, and Popham and Willes were elected.

At the next general election in 1774 Nathaniel Webb offered himself with the Hon. Edward Stratford, who was recommended by the Corporation and the Recorder of the town (who was also Prime Minister). They were opposed by John Halliday and Alexander Popham, and the following was the final state of the poll:—

Webb .. .. .	260
Stratford .. .. .	240
Halliday .. .. .	202
Popham .. .. .	201



A petition was lodged against the return, and complaint made that about one hundred and fifty disqualified persons had voted for Webb and Stratford.

A counter petition was also forwarded, and the result was that Halliday and Popham were declared to have been duly-elected members, and great festivities were the consequence, more than 1,000 horsemen joining in a triumphant procession to celebrate the event. Several persons, however, were prosecuted for bribery, and the Mayor was also prosecuted for giving a false return.

In 1780 John Halliday and Major-General Roberts were returned, and upon the death of the latter in 1782 Sir Benjamin Hammet was elected. Two years after was a general election, when Popham and Hammet were returned.

A spirited contest took place in 1790, the result of which was as follows:—

Hammet (Tory)	..	..	..	291
Popham (Whig)	..	..	..	257
Halliday (Whig)	..	..	..	239
Moreland (Tory)	..	..	..	183

Petitions were again presented, but in consequence of the non-fulfilment of standing orders they were of no avail.

At the general election of 1776 Sir Benjamin Hammet, Walter Boyd and William Moreland offered themselves; but Boyd retired from the contest. The name of Sir Benjamin Hammet brings us down towards our own times.

He was a man of whom Taunton may be proud, for he greatly benefited this town, having opened up the beautiful tower of St. Mary Magdalene by the erection of the street that now bears his name. He also greatly assisted in the restoration of Taunton Castle, which was in a state of decay, besides doing many other public acts of a beneficial character. He lived at Wilton House, and was buried in Wilton church.

At the death of Sir Benjamin Hammet in 1800 his son John Hammet was elected.

It was during the general election of 1802 that the dispute was settled as to the question of who was the legal returning-officer, now that there was no Mayor. Since that time the High Bailiffs, elected by the Bishop of Winchester's Court Leet, have exercised that right. A considerable riot also took place in consequence of a person striking a voter because he plumped for Robinson, and much excitement was shown, as the bribery oath was administered to all voters. Soon afterwards a petition against the return of Hammet and Moreland was lodged by Robinson, but no change was made.

At the general election of 1806, upon the death of Pitt and the ascension of Fox, a strong contest ensued.

Hammet (Tory)	..	..	..	370
Baring (Whig)	..	..	..	341
Moreland (Tory)	..	..	..	217

Upon which Moreland petitioned; but it being deemed frivolous, no notice was taken of it.

At the death of Hammet in 1811 Henry Powell Collins, of Hatch Court, and George Dashwood contested; but Collins was elected by a large majority.

In 1812 a general election took place in consequence of the accession to power of the Opposition, when Samuel Collaton Graves, of Hembury Fort, Devon, opposed the sitting members. The result was as follows:—

Baring (Whig)	..	..	..	258
Collins (Tory)	..	..	..	214
Graves	..	..	..	62

Another general election occurred in 1818, when Sir Wm. Burroughs (formerly a judge in London) opposed the sitting members. The poll lasted about a week, and a close contest was the effect. The result was—

Baring (Whig)	..	..	..	449
Burroughs (Whig)	..	..	..	349
Collins (Tory)	..	..	..	201

This return was petitioned against, and great complaint made of the conduct of the returning-officers. Upon inquiry it was found that Henry Powell Collins was the duly-elected member for the borough, and great rejoicings followed in consequence of the change.

By the death of George III. in 1820 another general election occurred, which proved a very severe contest between Alexander Baring, Henry Seymour and John Ashley Warre. The poll was open for 14 days, every voter being challenged. The following was the final result:—

Baring	..	(Whig)	..	..	407
Warre	..	(Whig)	..	..	326
Seymour	..	(Tory)	..	..	321

Upon which the latter demanded a scrutiny, which took place at the Market-house, but without producing any change.

There were 631 voters in the town at this time. This, it will be remembered, was previous to the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, which so materially altered the constitution of elections, especially in this town.

The next general election after the year 1820 commenced on the 14th of June, 1826, and ended eight days afterwards. Stirring events occurred at this time, for no less than seven candidates entered the field, although it is doubtful how many of them stood the poll.

It is said that coming events cast their shadows before them, and early in the autumn of the previous year we find addresses were issued and speeches delivered by the numerous candidates, so that the town was kept in a state of suspense and turmoil from eight to ten months, during which time the working classes (who occupied houses in the old borough, and consequently had votes) did little work, but imbibed much beer.

As this was one of the last elections previous to the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, it may be interesting to our younger readers to know something of the political state of this town previous to the adoption of that important measure.

The foregoing accounts have been extracted principally from the Histories of Taunton by Toulman and Savage. We propose to bring them down to the present time.

Neither Toulman or Savage give the slightest account of the politics or parties of the candidates or the members. This we have supplied as far as we have been able, which we trust will make the subject more interesting to our readers.

Half a century has passed away, during which time most important events have occurred and great alterations have taken place in the franchise and method of election. The British Constitution and the representative system have still maintained their places—the envy of neighbouring nations, and the glory of our own; and although there may be differences of opinion as to the amount or nature of “Reform,” all are agreed in maintaining the general character of the system.

The following extracts are from a letter written by the late James Bunter, Esq., and published in the *Taunton Courier*, November 30th, 1825:—“The agent of Sir Thomas Lethbridge delivered this statement to a gentleman who was anxious to obtain a seat in Parliament, and at the same time assured him that the property referred to was in and near the borough of Taunton:—‘Particulars of a freehold interest and property for sale: The number of votes in the borough is under 400; there are 130 in the control of the vendor (Sir T. Lethbridge); 90 independent, who support Ministers, and uniformly side with the vendor; 60 under the control of the second member, and about 120 reformers, who at present divide their votes. The only plot of ground in the borough in which additional tenements can be erected is included in the proposed sale, and on this spot 200 houses may be built, which would secure to the purchaser the absolute return for both seats.’”

The letter goes on to explain the financial part of the bargain, the price being £25,000, and concludes by stating that the property has been in the vendor's family nearly 200 years, and that he is on an “agreeable footing” with the voters not directly under his control.

A perusal of the above statement must surely have opened the eyes of the “free and independent” worthies of that day, and some astonishment must have been created when they found how nicely they and their franchises were quietly offered for sale.

But to return to the election of 1826. The first candidate we would notice would be Mr. Henry Mervyn Bayley, of Plymouth, who was evidently a man of strange deportment, and who read his speech to the electors, sitting like a tailor on the sill of one of the Market-house windows, and endeavouring to enforce attention to his strange oratory by presenting a pair of loaded pistols. His committee, not understanding this line of argument, gradually left him, and in consequence of his violent conduct would have no further dealings with him. So he did not go to poll, but offered one hundred guineas for the apprehension of his detractors. The next candidate was General Peachey, of Keswick, in the county of Cumberland, a resolute, plucky old gentleman, who was afterwards well known in this borough and professed Tory politics. The third candidate in the field was Mr. Henry Seymour, who had contested this borough at the previous election. Mr. Henry Cresswell, of Taunton, canvassed for his brother, Mr. Richard Estcourt Cresswell, a Whig, of Pickney Park, Wilts, and in order to keep open the poll afterwards offered himself as a candidate. These brothers seem to have been violent in their conduct and to have exasperated the mob, who attacked the White Hart Inn (their head-quarters), broke in the windows with bricks and stones, and plastered the whole front with mud—all after eleven o'clock at night, although the Cresswells attempted with drawn swords to prevent the disturbance. The next candidate was Mr. Francis Baring, the son of the late Mr. Alexander Baring, formerly M.P. for this town. And the last on our list was Mr. Humphrey St. John Mildmay, a gentleman of whom little was known. Great excitement prevailed, and the electors demanded that the bribery and other oaths should be administered to all voters by a special commissioner. After a most noisy election the result was as follows:—

Seymour (Tory)	..	..	..	516
Peachey (Tory)	..	..	..	458
Cresswell (Whig)	..	..	..	291
Baring (Whig)	..	..	..	122
Mildmay	..	..	..	22
E. Cresswell (Whig)	..	..	..	10

We have seen a little book containing the names of all the electors and how they voted; also a list of no less than 70 persons who are designated “turncoats,” and 24 rejected voters.

It was about this time that the great question was the

abolition of the laws restricting Roman Catholics. The long-talked-of subject of Parliamentary Reform was also uppermost, and the claims of the inhabitants of the large towns and cities that sent no members to Parliament were strongly and most pressingly enforced.

In 1830 the death of George the Fourth caused a general election. As Mr. Seymour, the late member, declined standing, a new man was sought for, and Mr. Edward Thomas Bainbridge, of St. Paul's churchyard, London, offered himself. It would appear that he came in under the patronage of the Tories, with blue colours; but before long a "change came o'er the scene," and the blue turned to green. As on the previous election there had been a split in the Whig or Liberal camp, so now it took place with their opponents. The Liberals introduced Mr. Henry Labouchere, who during the late Parliament had represented the electors of St. Michael's, and who gave promise of considerable ability. He was connected with the Baring family, having married a daughter of Sir Thomas Baring (after her death he married into the Earl of Carlisle's family). General Peachey, the sitting member for Taunton, also offered himself for re-election, and a warm contest ensued, the result of which is shown in the final state of the poll:—

Labouchere (Liberal)	..	..	430
Bainbridge (Liberal)	..	..	280
Peachey (Conservative)	..	..	223

Upon which General Peachey presented a petition to Parliament in the following Spring, complaining of the undue return of Mr. Bainbridge, and charging the said Edward Thomas Bainbridge and his agents with obtaining the seat through "gifts, rewards, promises, agreements and securities for places given and made by his sanction and consent." The case came for trial on the 23rd February, 1831, a fine muster of lawyers and others being retained. A preliminary objection to the petition was made by the counsel for Mr. Bainbridge, "that no one could by law petition unless he had an interest in the case, and that General Peachey had none, as cases of bribery could be proved against him, which would disqualify him from sitting in the present Parliament." This objection was, however, overruled. We have before us a neat little volume, of only 300 pages, giving a "full and correct account" of this interesting trial; but as few of our readers will care to plod all through its weary length, we will merely observe that it "such a tale unfolds" as does no credit to the town of Taunton; and we also notice the same names are there as are yet mixed up with the dirty business now 40 years afterwards. The result of the petition was that on March the 10th the committee decided that Edward Thomas Bainbridge was duly elected, and that

the petition against the return was neither frivolous or vexatious.

It was, we believe, at this election that the "Tally system" was done away with. For Young Taunton's benefit we will explain that after an election the law allowed the members to give "tallies" to such persons as applied for them. These were called Gratitude Tickets, and entitled the recipients to receive the sum of £7 for plumpers, or £3 10s. for split votes.

It was also the custom to give dinners to the voters, sometimes at the expense of the members, and occasionally by subscription, the after-dinner speeches being often marvels of oratory.

General Peachey never again offered himself for the borough; but the inhabitants met, made a subscription, and presented him with a piece of plate. Pieces were also given to some of his late committee.

Important events had occurred within the few previous years, and many changes had been made in the Ministry. In 1827 Lord Liverpool (who had been Prime Minister since 1812) retired from office, and was succeeded by Mr. Canning, who died August, 1827. Lord Goderich followed. Then in January, 1825, the Duke of Wellington, by whose Government the great measure of Reform was brought in.

It was about this time that railways and steam began to supersede the old-fashioned mode of travelling; and although the people suffered from want of corn, and riots followed, the country soon recovered its wonted prosperity, and the discontent that had been manifested probably paved the way to the introduction of Free Trade.

Many changes had taken place in the Ministry of this country, the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel and Lord Grey being successively Prime Ministers. The Liberal Government, in consequence of the opposition offered to it, dissolved the Parliament that had been elected in the previous August. The new elections throughout the country were carried on with great excitement, and gave a majority of 109 in the House of Commons in favour of Reform, Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Bainbridge being returned for this borough. They were opposed by Pemberton, a Conservative. After the passing of the Reform Bill great rejoicing took place in most cities and boroughs. In this town was a grand procession of trades, and a public dinner on a very extensive scale. Tables were laid on the Parade and in the adjoining streets, and the joy of the people seemed unbounded.

In 1832 Mr. Labouchere was invited to take the office of Lord of the Admiralty, and consequently was obliged to come to Taunton for re-election. No opposition being offered, he was returned, and was "carried" triumphantly

through the streets in a chair, shaped like a boat (an emblem of his office), gaily decorated with buff colours.

In the course of the autumn of 1832 Parliament was again dissolved. The great political question of the day was the abolition of slavery in the British possessions. Large and numerously-attended public meetings were held in this and other towns, and considerable interest was manifested, the sum of twenty millions being subsequently granted by the British Parliament for the purpose. Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Bainbridge were again returned.

In July, 1834, Lord Grey resigned the office of Prime Minister, and was succeeded by Lord Melbourne, but in November following the King dismissed his Ministers, and the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel succeeded as joint Prime Ministers.

In 1835 another general election took place, when Mr. Montague Gore, a barrister, unsuccessfully opposed the late members for this borough, Messrs. Labouchere and Bainbridge, who were consequently returned. Mr. Gore did not go to the poll, but it is said left the town clandestinely. It was also in this year that Mr. Labouchere, being invited to take the offices of Master of the Mint and Vice-President of the Board of Trade, returned to Taunton for re-election, and was opposed by Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, the younger (since become the leading member of the Conservatives). The contest, though unequalled, was carried on with much vigour, and the result was as follows :—

Labouchere (Liberal) .. ..	452
Disraeli (Conservative) .. ..	282

Two important Acts were passed about this time, the first relating to Municipal Reform, and the second was the new Poor Law.

On the 20th of June, 1837, King William IV. died, and, Victoria being proclaimed Queen, a general election took place. The sitting members, Messrs. Labouchere and Bainbridge, offered themselves, and were opposed by Mr. Newton Lee, a Conservative, who had the character of formerly holding other views. The result of the poll was as follows :—

Labouchere (Liberal) .. ..	469
Bainbridge (Liberal) .. ..	414
Newton Lee (Conservative) .. ..	409

A petition was presented against the return of Bainbridge.

In this election out of 840 voters on the poll-books 790 recorded their votes. It may be asked—How was it that the Liberals returned two members for so many elections before and after this time? We believe the answer may be given by stating that Mr. Labouchere was a generally popular man, of very moderate politics; and being of rising ability and

affable manners, many of his political opponents supported him, and as he was so long a member of the Government he was able to assist a large number of voters and their families to "good places," thereby gaining many fast friends of all parties.

As to the repeated returns of Mr. Bainbridge, when we inform our readers that that gentleman was the fortunate purchaser of the Lethbridge property (previously referred to), and which was said to have more or less control over nearly one half of the voters of this borough, we think little more explanation is required.

The result of the past election, in which Mr. Bainbridge was carried by a majority of only *five*, will show the Conservative feeling of the town, although such powerful interests were brought to bear against it.

We cannot pass the time under notice without reminding our readers that the "Chartist riots" now took place and caused considerable excitement and confusion in the country, principally confined to the North of England and Wales.

In 1838 the Corn Law League was established, which, although despised at first, afterwards produced considerable fruit in the change of the public opinion of this country.

In 1839 the Right Hon. Henry Labouchere accepted the office of President of the Board of Trade, and was returned in this borough without opposition.

During the winters of 1842-3, in consequence of a famine, rioting was renewed by the Chartists and the "Daughters of Rebecca" (sturdy fellows dressed in petticoats); but the disturbances were speedily quelled, and a season of great prosperity followed for many years.

On the 29th June, 1841, another general election took place, when Mr. Wilberforce (son of the noted Wilberforce, of anti-slavery celebrity), and Mr. Hall, a barrister, opposed the late members. The final state of the poll was as follows :—

Labouchere (Liberal) .. ..	439
Bainbridge (Liberal) .. ..	414
Wilberforce (Conservative) .. ..	382
Hall (Conservative) .. ..	216

Although re-elected, Mr. Bainbridge did not long enjoy his seat, for the following year he accepted the Chiltern Hundreds. A single-handed contest now took place for the vacant seat. The Liberals brought forward Sir Thomas Edward Colebrooke, Bart., who was opposed by Mr. Hall, the unsuccessful candidate at the previous election. The result was as follows :—

Colebrooke (Liberal) .. ..	394
Hall (Conservative) .. ..	337

In 1846 Mr. Labouchere was returned unopposed, on the event of his accepting the office of Secretary for Ireland. Again, on 30th June, 1847, was Taunton found in the full excitement of a general election, when Arthur Mills, Esq., a barrister, of Warwick, county Warwick, who was a moderate Conservative in politics and a son-in-law of Sir Thomas Acland, opposed the sitting members. The result of the poll was as follows:—

Labouchere (Liberal) .. ..	543
Colebrooke (Liberal) .. ..	388
Mills (Conservative) .. ..	376

284 of Mr. Mills's votes were plumpers.

As soon as the result of this election was known immense excitement was manifested. Some of the lower classes, being much exasperated by the jokes of the winning party, seized various portions of the timbers of which the hustings and polling-booths were constructed and attacked their opponents. Serious injury was done to the "chair" in which Mr. Colebrooke was "carried," and the honourable baronet himself did not escape uninjured. The mob followed the Colebrooke party to the London Hotel, their head-quarters, and made an attack with stones upon the windows, much injury being done.

In 1852 the Right Honourable Henry Labouchere, being again nominated for the office of President of the Board of Trade, an election occurred, but no opposition being offered it passed off very quietly.

At this time the Earl of Derby, having been appointed Minister, was constantly questioned by the Opposition as to the intentions of the Government respecting the continuation of free trade, which was then the great topic of the day. This, he said, could only be served by the voice of the people. Accordingly on the 9th July, 1852, a general election took place. The Right Honourable Henry Labouchere and Sir Thos. Edward Colebrooke (the late members) offered themselves. They were opposed by Mr. A. Mills, their opponent in 1847. After a severe contest the result of the poll was as follows:—

Labouchere (Liberal) .. ..	430
Mills (Conservative) .. ..	361
Colebrooke (Liberal) .. ..	358

Great were the rejoicings of the Conservatives, who after twenty-six years' trial had succeeded in returning a member. A grand Conservative festival was held under a spacious marquee near Tone Bridge, and it was considered by them that, now the interests of the Bainbridge property was withdrawn, the town would be more fairly represented. Many of the leading Conservatives even went further, and maintained that they were entitled to the entire representation of the borough; and they looked forward with much anxiety to the time when their fond

hope should be realised. But, alas for earthly happiness! The Liberals not only differed in opinion on these subjects, but considered themselves aggrieved as to the method in which Mr. Mills had obtained his seat. They therefore lodged a petition, and upon full inquiry the committee of the House of Commons decided that bribery and agency had been proved, and that the said Arthur Mills was not duly returned.

Early in the following year, therefore, a new election took place, Mr. Mills being disqualified for the remainder of the session. Henry Badcock, Esq., banker, of Taunton, and a friend of Mr. Mills, was solicited to accept the vacant seat. His return was opposed by Sir John Ramsden—a gentleman of Liberal views and of untold fortune, the whole of the town of Huddersfield (except one house) being his property. Sir John, being a very young man, was accompanied and advised by an old Parliamentary and politician, namely, Mr. Horsman (since well known in the House of Commons).

Mr. Badcock declined to canvass the borough, or even to solicit votes; yet the Conservatives were within six of winning, the state of the poll being as follows:—

Ramsden (Liberal) .. ..	372
Badcock (Conservative) .. ..	367

As the practice of "chairing" the members was about this time discontinued, and our younger readers may never have seen the ceremony, we will add a few words of explanation for their benefit. A bill having since been passed through the Houses of Parliament for the better conducting the return of the members, chairing and many other similar matters are abolished. Each party assumed some distinguishing colour, that of the Whigs having been yellow, and that of the Conservatives blue; but when Mr. Bainbridge was first introduced he came in under the favour of the Conservatives, with blue colours, but soon seemed to change sides or opinions, and he assumed the "green" badge for the first time. Coloured flags and rosettes were in constant demand throughout the eventful occasion. Each party hired a band, which fully displayed its favourite colours when it perambulated the town; and "when Greek met Greek then came the tug of war." When a candidate was declared by the returning-officers to be duly elected member for this borough he proceeded to return his thanks to the electors, for which purpose he mounted a grand triumphal car, or "chair," placed upon an open carriage, duly decorated with his favourite colour, and in this manner was drawn through the various streets, bowing and returning the salutations of his partisans. He was escorted by a large number of his party and followers.

It was in 1852, and previous to the assembling of the

new Parliament, that the Duke of Wellington died, at a time when the increase and state of our national defences and army were engaging the minds of the people. The Premier (the Earl of Derby) and the Government were generally in favour of a peace policy, although our neighbours, the French, were at this time in a very tumultuous state. But upon a defeat of 306 against 286 on Disraeli's financial budget they resigned before they carried their proposed Reform Bill. A new Government was formed by a combination of Whigs and Peelites, with the Earl of Aberdeen at their head and Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Labouchere taking the office of President of the Board of Trade. Upon his return to this town for re-election no opposition was offered.

We cannot pass over the years which immediately followed without reminding our readers that the Crimean War now took place, the horrors of which will not soon be forgotten.

In February, 1855, Lord John Russell introduced his new bill for Reform, in which he proposed to abolish sixty-two seats, and to reduce many towns to one member instead of two (Taunton, we believe, was among the number). The franchise was to be altered, and given to those who had £100 a-year as salary, who received £10 a-year from Government stocks, or who had a deposit of £50 in the savings' bank; but in consequence of the urgency of the war this bill was not passed.

The Government having become unpopular in consequence of the mismanagement of the war, they resigned, and a new Ministry was formed under Lord Palmerston. Peace was soon afterwards welcomed by the people, but was of short duration, for scarcely had the jey-bells ceased ringing when the country was thrown into a panic by the news that our East Indian possessions were in a state of mutiny, the particulars of which are doubtless fresh in the memories of our readers.

In 1855 Mr. Labouchere took the office of Colonial Secretary, no opposition being offered to his return.

On the 28th March, 1857, another general election took place, the candidates being the Right Hon. Henry Labouchere and Mr. Campbell (son of Lord Chief Justice Campbell) in the Liberal interest, who were opposed by Mr. Arthur Mills. The result will be shown by the final state of the poll, which was as follows:—

Labouchere (Liberal)	..	..	442
Mills (Conservative)	..	..	401
Campbell (Liberal)	..	..	366

The plumpers were—Labouchere, 6; Campbell, 4; Mills, 296.

In 1858, the Indian mutiny having been quelled, Lord

Palmerston's Ministry proposed to introduce a bill to establish the Government of India on a new footing, by transferring the power from the East India Company. This was negatived in the House of Commons by 318 to 173. Lord Palmerston's Government therefore resigned. It was followed by a Ministry under Lord Derby; but so great was the excitement of the people on the subject of the Government of India that there were great fears that not only would the new Government be upset, but that an appeal to the votes of the country would be made. Peace having been restored in India, and the new bill for the re-arrangement of the Government of that country having been passed, the nation turned its attention to its own Government and affairs.

A general election took place on the 30th April, in the year 1859. Four candidates offered themselves in this borough—the Right Hon. Henry Labouchere and Mr. A. Mills (the late members), who were opposed by George Cavendish Bentinck, Esq., a Conservative, and a connection of the great Cavendish family, and by William Beadon, Esq., a gentleman of this town, residing at Wick, on the Blackdown-hills, who had for many years taken an active part in the politics of this borough, and held Liberal or Radical views. A large number of the Liberal party were very anxious to see a considerable change respecting the representation of the people, the extension of the franchise and vote by ballot being among the things most generally desired. Their representative, Mr. Labouchere, being in their opinion too slow in forwarding their views, they introduced a man of their own opinions; and although Mr. Labouchere had done so much for many of the voters and their friends, they did not scruple to forsake his banner and support Mr. Beadon. The Conservatives were not backward in taking advantage of this "split in the Liberal camp." They rallied round their man, and triumphantly placed him at the head of the poll; and now for the first time for nearly thirty years Mr. Labouchere's name was not at the top of the list, the following being the final state of the poll:—

Mills (Conservative)	..	..	406
Labouchere (Liberal)	..	..	388
Bentinck (Conservative)	..	..	323
Beadon (Radical)	..	..	265

The Conservatives now confidently looked forward to the time when they should occupy both seats, and an opportunity soon occurred that offered them a trial, for a few months after Mr. Labouchere's friends, seeing the critical position in which he was placed, prevailed upon him to accept a seat in the House of Lords, which, it is said, had been offered him many years previously.



The 9th of August, 1859, was fixed upon for the day of election, and as it was to be a contest for a single seat the time was looked forward to with much anxiety, as it was considered it would pretty well show the state of political feeling in the borough. Each party did its utmost to secure votes. The candidates were George Cavendish Bentinck, Esq., who was unsuccessful in the Conservative interest at the previous election, and Mr. Barclay, a gentleman of wealth, and connected with the firm of Barclay, Perkins and Co., the great brewers of London. Mr. Barclay's politics were Liberal; he professed himself in favour of the Ballet, the abolition of church-rates, and of the maintenance of free trade. The following was the final state of the poll:—

Bentinck (Conservative) .. ..	381
Barclay (Liberal) .. ..	336

For the first time, therefore, since 1826 was the town of Taunton represented by two Conservative members.

Considerable time elapsed before another election took place, during which time many great and important laws were passed for the better government of the country. We may especially refer to the various acts known as the Public Health, Police Clauses, Health of Towns, and numerous others, calculated to promote the health and happiness of the people. With regard to the Reform Bill, a general apathy seemed to exist, for although all classes admitted a necessity for some change, the general state of the country was so prosperous, and the people themselves so happy and contented, that they seemed willing to adopt the recommendation of Lord John Russell, "to rest and be thankful." As time passed on, Lord Palmerston being at the head of the State, the people felt a consciousness of safety; and although the great struggle in America took place and lasted over three years, threatening to involve this country in war, all passed off happily, a general desire for peace pervading all parties throughout the empire.

But even Parliaments must come to an end; consequently on July 12th, 1865, a general election took place. Preparations for the coming struggle had been shown in this borough some months previously, and sharp contests took place in the barristers' courts, with spirited competitions for every public appointment that occurred. The Conservatives, believing that "possession (of the seats) was nine points of the law," seemed to take matters tolerably easy; but their opponents, feeling that the honour of the old borough depended upon their using their most determined and united efforts, banded themselves together and, forgetting all minor points of difference in their political creed, made a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether. Mr. A. Mills again offered himself, although anything but a

hearty spirit seemed manifested in his favour. He had gradually lost the affection of his own party, and had given offence to many by actions and words which really did not deserve the ill-feeling they gave rise to. After canvassing for several days, and announcing "most unparalleled success," he suddenly made himself scarce, and a note in the *Times* informed the world that Mr. A. Mills could not accept the representation of the borough of Taunton "upon any condition that would be dishonourable or illegal." In consequence of this unexpected occurrence Alfred Austin, Esq., a barrister, of Hertfordshire, a gentleman of great eloquence and holding moderate Conservative principles, came forward. Although at so late a time, he soon became a popular man, and had he been in the field earlier would have polled a large number of votes. The late Conservative member, Mr. Bentinck, gave notice that he did not intend offering himself for this town. It is said that "his worthy uncle had offered him a snug country borough, with little or no competition." The other Conservative candidate was Edward William Cox, Esq., also a barrister, and of considerable ability. He was the owner of the *Law Times*, the *Field*, and other papers; he was also Recorder of Falmouth, and a native of this town, having been closely connected with its various families and trades for many years past. The Liberals brought forward their old champion, Mr. Barclay, together with Lord Hay, a son of the Marquis of Tweeddale, of an old Scotch family—a gentleman of position and influence. It is to be feared that a considerable amount of "undue influence" was used in the shape of "five" and "ten pounders," for it appears that when the Conservatives "took stock" they found themselves in a minority. Knowing they could not win, they did not exert themselves. The Liberals consequently polled in large numbers, as the following state of the case will show:—

Barclay (Liberal) .. ..	478
Hay (Liberal) .. ..	470
Cox (Conservative) .. ..	292
Austin (Conservative) .. ..	260

This state of things took many by surprise; but those who were in the secret and knew the want of good leaders among the Conservatives, the indifference of many of the party, and the confusion caused by the retreat of Mr. Mills, expected no other result. However, the hearts of the "Blue Party" were somewhat comforted by an assurance, given by each of their Conservative candidates, that petitions should be lodged against the returns of Mr. Barclay and Lord Hay, and that no means should be left untried to eject them.

Our description of the elections in this town thus far was written five years ago. The book, when complete, was submitted to the inspection of the late Lord Taunton, who, in a note to the writer, was pleased to express his approbation of the same, and at once to order four copies of the forthcoming History of Taunton. His lordship also notified his approbation that the work should be dedicated to him.

The petition against the return of A. C. Barclay, Esq., and of Lord Hay was not pressed. It is said that the Conservatives offered to withdraw it, if a number of the leading Liberals engaged to take no part in the next election. It was considered that the adoption of this plan would allow Mr. Cox to come in easily; but, alas for human foresight! events took place in the interim that quite upset all such nice little arrangements.

The following particulars of the new member may be of interest to our readers:—Lord William Montagu Hay, third son of the Marquis of Tweeddale, was born in 1826. He was appointed to the Civil Service of the Hon. East India Company on their Bengal Establishment, in the month of April, 1845. Ordered by the Governor-General to proceed to the North-West Provinces, Lord Hay rose rapidly. By attention to public business he passed through the several gradations of the service, until, in the year 1852, he was appointed by Sir John Lawrence, the then Lieutenant-Governor, to the united offices of Deputy-Commissioner and Superintendent of the Frontier at Simla in the Himalayas, and of the protected Hill States at Sabothoo. These were offices of great trust and responsibility; he became, in fact, the representative of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces of India. Lord Hay continued in that position until his return to England. He was at Simla during the fearful mutiny in 1857.

The great question of the day, which had for years occupied the attention of the electors, was that of the representation of the people. Several attempts had been made in the House of Commons by successive Governments—by Gladstone in 1866 and by Disraeli in the following year—to introduce a suitable bill; but none had given satisfaction to the House of Commons or the country at large.

After numerous suggestions—report says that it was by a letter from Mr. Serjeant Cox—to Lord Derby, who was then the head of the Conservative Government, the system was suggested that was ultimately adopted. In this letter Mr. Cox advocated a re-adoption of the old scot-and-lot system, such as was formerly in existence in this borough, when the electors were known under the old Saxon term of potwealers or potwollopers. The number

of electors under the Reform Bill of 1832 was about 800. Under the Representation of the People Act the number would be nearly two thousand. This may be a suitable place to point out all the changes produced by the new Act. As regards the number of Members of Parliament, Taunton returned two as before.

The borough of Taunton consists of portions of five parishes—Taunton St. Mary, Taunton St. James, Bishop's Hull, Wilton and West Monkton. The Parliamentary boundaries were described in 3, William IV., cap. 64. The powers of the Taunton Board of Health were co-extensive with the borough. The following figures from the census of 1861 will show the number of inhabitants of each parish in and out of the borough previous to enlargement under the Representation of the People's Act:—

	Within the Boundary.	Without the Boundary.	Total Census. 1861.
Taunton St. Mary Magdalene..	8,252 ..	228 ..	8,481
„ St. James .....	4,813 ..	426 ..	5,239
Bishop's Hull .....	769 ..	845 ..	1,614
Wilton .....	818 ..	212 ..	1,030
West Monkton .....	14 ..	1,139 ..	1,153
	14,667	2,850	17,517

The parish of Taunton St. Mary Magdalene contains 1,300 acres, and extends in an eastern direction more than one mile from the nearest part of the boundary.

The parish of Taunton St. James contains 1,455 acres, and extends in a northern direction more than a mile from the nearest part of the boundary.

The parish of Bishop's Hull contains 1,341 acres, and extends in a western direction more than a mile from the nearest part of the boundary.

The parish of Wilton contains 700 acres, and extends in a southern direction more than half a mile from the nearest part of the boundary.

The parish of West Monkton contains 3,079 acres, of which only the small portion of 1a. 2r. 29p. are within the boundary of the borough (see report of Herbert and Page on Taunton Improvement and Market Bill, page 11, 1847), and extends in a north-eastern direction more than three miles from the nearest part of the boundary.

(For the acreage of each parish see "County of Somerset Constabulary Committee Returns," 1856.)

In the autumn of 1867 Colonel Hamley and W. E. Ollivant, Esq., two commissioners, came to Taunton to examine as to enlarging the boundaries of the borough. The general opinion in the town was that it was not necessary; but on inquiry it was considered desirable to do so on the northern and western sides, whereby Rowbarton and the neighbourhood and the new villas near Haines-hill were included.

The great event occupying the attention of the House of Commons, and consequently that of the people of England, at this time was the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. This was the war-cry at the general election of 1868. Other subjects, perhaps almost equally important, engaged their thoughts, among which we would mention the Bill for the Abolition of Compulsory Church-rates, that of Elementary Education, and the opening of the Universities to members of all denominations.

The sitting member for the borough of Taunton, A. C. Barclay, Esq., offered himself for re-election. Lord Hay determined otherwise. So the Liberals selected Henry James, Esq., a barrister, of the New Court, Temple. He was a gentleman of acknowledged ability and of considerable practice, and gave the promise of a place among our leading men. Soon after the addresses of these gentlemen appeared, others were circulated, signed by Henry Thomas Cole, Q.C., barrister, also of the Temple. The Liberals protested against his coming forward without invitation and against the wishes of their party. So they determined to offer a strong opposition. After some weeks' excitement Mr. Cole was *non est*; but his agents remained some time in the town, as many persons can testify to their cost.

The candidate on the Conservative interest was Edward William Cox, Esq., serjeant-at-law, the well-known townsman, who determined again to solicit the votes of the electors.

After the usual exciting scenes of a general election the following was the result of the poll:—

A. C. Barclay, Esq.	..	..	1,105
Mr. Serjeant Cox	..	..	918
Henry James, Esq.	..	..	890

The plumpers awarded to each were—Mr. Cox, 680; Mr. Barclay, 16; Mr. James, 7. There were 222 split votes for Cox and Barclay, 16 for Cox and James, and 867 for Barclay and James. The constituency consisted of 1,902 electors, of whom 1,808 polled, leaving the small number of 94 only unpolled out of nearly 2,000 voters.

Both parties seemed somewhat surprised at the result; but it was immediately determined to lodge a petition against the return of Mr. Serjeant Cox and claim the seat for Mr. Henry James. Among the objections raised was one, that the Conservatives had paid a number of their party five shillings each as a day's pay for attending the Barrister's Court to claim their votes. On trial this objection proved fatal, and the Conservatives lost their man and their temper; for it seemed hard that *they* should suffer, and that Mr. James should succeed, when he admitted in his cross-examination that the Liberals had paid similar sums. It appears that to have prevented him from occupying the seat a petition ought to have been lodged

against his return at the same time that that against Mr. Cox was sent.

This was not done at the time, and a question of law was afterwards raised on this point. As it was the first case, and therefore had no precedent, it was argued before the four judges in the Court of Common Pleas. That Court declared that it had no power to hear a petition, it admitted the apparent injustice of the case, and intimated "that the House of Commons had full authority over the election of its members." At a meeting of the Conservative electors it was unanimously decided, "that it is expedient to petition the House of Commons against the return of Mr. Henry James;" but nothing further was done.

The following appeared in a Taunton paper on the subject:—"It must be distinctly understood that the petition was not withdrawn unconditionally. It was from overtures made by the leaders of the Liberal party, and from those overtures having led to arrangements which were calculated to eventuate in lasting advantages to the local interests of Conservatism that the proceedings in this case were withdrawn. Those gentlemen, one of whom will come forward to take a share in the representation of the borough on Conservative interests, are, we believe, satisfied with the arrangements; the Parliamentary agents and other legal advisers, as well as those, too, who are interested in the welfare of the great Conservative party, were fully persuaded of the propriety and advantages of the course; and the leaders of the party at home fully concur in all that has been done. Under these circumstances there can be no cause for dissatisfaction. We therefore think it matter for congratulation that another period of political excitement and personal ill-will is spared to us; that individuals and the whole constituency are saved the disgrace which would attach to the disclosures which were about to be made, and that on a vacancy occurring both parties will be represented at Taunton."

In recording these events we must not forget to mention that it was at this time that the Working Men's Associations were formed, for the furtherance of the political opinions and interests of each party. There cannot be a doubt that considerable power is exercised by these associations when well worked, and that they tend to gather and keep together the votes of the working men, now so numerous.

Before closing it may not be amiss to say a few words on the importance of each and every vote, remembering that it is a sacred trust that ought to be exercised with judgment and discretion; and however unimportant a single vote may appear, it has on various occasions produced great

results. The vote of a single elector has returned a candidate; and in the House of Commons it was a single vote that decided the Hanoverian succession.

We have stated that the new member (Mr. H. James) was a gentleman of acknowledged ability. This was soon proved by the speeches he made in the House of Commons, especially on the subjects of the rights of married women and the ballot.

In Savage's History of Taunton, page 365, may be seen a list of all the members of Parliament for the borough of Taunton from the year 1409 to A.D. 1820. The following addition will extend it to the present time (1871):—

1820.—Baring, Whig .. ..	407	1859.—Labouchere, Liberal .. ..	388
Warre, " .. ..	326	Mills, Conservative .. ..	406
Seymour, Conservative .. ..	321	Beadon, Liberal .. ..	256
1826.—Seymour, Conservative .. ..	515	Bentinck, Conservative .. ..	323
Peschey, " .. ..	458	1859.—Bentinck, Conservative .. ..	351
Creswell, Liberal .. ..	291	Barday, Liberal .. ..	336
Baring, " .. ..	123	1865.—Barday, Liberal .. ..	478
Mildmay, Conservative .. ..	22	Hay, " .. ..	470
E. Creswell, Liberal .. ..	10	Cox, Conservative .. ..	292
1830.—Labouchere, Liberal .. ..	430	Austin, " .. ..	260
Bainbridge, " .. ..	280	1868.—Barday, Liberal .. ..	1,105
Peschey, Conservative .. ..	223	Cox, Conservative .. ..	918
1832.—Labouchere, Liberal .. ..	..	James, Liberal .. ..	890
Bainbridge, " .. ..	..		
1835.—Labouchere, Liberal .. ..	..		
Bainbridge, " .. ..	..		
Montague Gore, Conservative .. ..	..		
1835.—H. Labouchere, Liberal .. ..	452		
B. Disraeli, Conservative .. ..	282		
1837.—Labouchere, Liberal .. ..	469		
Bainbridge, " .. ..	414		
Lee, Conservative .. ..	409		
1841.—Labouchere, Liberal .. ..	430		
Bainbridge, " .. ..	409		
Wilberforce, Conservative .. ..	381		
Hall, " .. ..	318		
1842.—Colebrooke, Liberal .. ..	395		
Hall, Conservative .. ..	337		
1847.—Labouchere, Liberal .. ..	543		
Colebrooke, " .. ..	388		
Mills, Conservative .. ..	376		
1852.—Labouchere, Liberal .. ..	430		
Mills, Conservative .. ..	361		
Colebrooke, Liberal .. ..	358		
1853.—Ramsden, Liberal .. ..	372		
Badcock, Conservative .. ..	367		
1857.—Labouchere, Liberal .. ..	442		
Mills, Conservative .. ..	401		
Campbell, Liberal .. ..	366		

Cole did not go to poll, and James, on petition, took Cox's seat. The numbers polled by the successful candidates are also given.

### The Siege of 1645.

In our history of West Somerset, and in the description of "The Valley of the Tone," some particulars are given respecting Taunton in the olden time and of the siege, the noted defence by General Blake, and afterwards of the Western Insurrection, and the trials and executions of the followers of the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth; but we feel it would not be fair to the old town if we did not specifically mention some further particulars.

Savage's History of Taunton contains a very full account of the proceedings of these periods, but to those of our readers who have no copy of the work, or who prefer the pith without wading through some forty pages of somewhat uninteresting matter, we offer the following:—

We mentioned in a previous paper that the late eminent historian and poet Macaulay had well described these times, and we cannot therefore do better than again suggest to those who would fully read the subject to obtain his very spirited and beautiful work. It will be remembered that the English nation was then passing through her most trying ordeal. The free circulation of the Bible in the vulgar tongue, through the instrumentality of the newly-discovered art of printing, had wrought wonderful changes in the character of the British nation. The people began to think, and consequently to act, for themselves; and if the Royal mandate was not according to the law of the land, or if the edicts of the church and clergy were not in accordance with the Bible, the people refused obedience.

But although this was the case with many, there were still great numbers who, having doubtful minds, or from fear or respect of the "powers that be," still maintained the cause of Church and State. Into these two great factions England was at this time divided.

Taunton, though a loyal, was a very independent borough, and it was not until the King had totally disregarded the established laws of the land that the Tauntonians forsook the Royal standard. But things were now come to a crisis, and Taunton, ever true to the side of right and religion, made her stand.

At this time, though a small town, Taunton was wealthy and populous, but the Royalist Governor (Col. Reeves), who had been placed here by the King, appears to have been a person of no energy or character. Robert Blake, a man of courage, prudence and experience, determined with his body of militia and the assistance of Sir Robert Pye's regiment and Col. Massey to endeavour to take the town and hold it for the Parliamentary or popular interests. He therefore appeared before the gates of Taunton with his insignificant force and offered the Governor and garrison, in case of their surrender, honourable terms. These Col. Reeves in a cowardly manner accepted, and marched with his troops to Bridgwater, while Blake and his little army entered the town amid the ringing of bells and every manifestation of joy on the part of the townsmen. Thus on the 8th July, 1644, without bloodshed, was Taunton lost to the Royalist cause.

Such being the case, no means were left untried by the King's party to retake this, the most important town between Bristol and Exeter. Col. Wyndham, the Governor of Bridgwater and the local rival of Blake, was sent against it. He marched with his forces and demanded of Blake in the most menacing language his immediate surrender of the town under pain of fire and sword in case of refusal, at the same time pointing out the impracticability of defence and the loss of life which would ensue in case of an attempt to sustain a siege being made. Blake was not the man to comply with such a request, and, being surrounded by the trusty and valiant townsmen, sent a resolute reply. Then, without further parley, commenced one of the most determined attacks and the most courageous defences to be found in ancient or modern warfare.

It is very certain that Taunton was not in a fit state to withstand the attacks of a powerful army provided with heavy cannon and the various military engines.

The Castle, too, although surrounded with a double moat, and standing a little above the surrounding houses, was out of repair; in fact much of it was in ruins. Blake, however, made the best of things as he found them. He caused the neighbouring roads to be blockaded, and breastworks to be erected at the three various entrances to the town.

Wyndham, savage at the repeated unsuccessful attempts

to take the place, determined to invest it and cut off all supplies; but Blake's men made many courageous sallies, broke the enemy's line, and thereby obtained repeated supplies of food.

It was at this time that news came that Lord Goring, with 10,000 men and heavy ordnance, was marching to attack the town, and in case of not succeeding in taking it, then reducing it to ashes. Soon Sir Richard Greville also appeared with 3,000 foot and horse, and surrounded and besieged the place. And now the combined forces of Wyndham, Greville, Wagstaff and Goring, in overwhelming numbers, attacked this devoted town.

In a short time the cannon soon destroyed many houses, especially on the outskirts, and fighting was taking place on all sides. But still Taunton held its own, and although the enemy made many inroads, they were always repulsed and driven back before they reached the centre of the town. St. Mary's tower was converted into a watch-tower, cannon were planted at all available places, and every house and buttress, chimney and wall were made use of as embrasures. But famine began to tell a sad tale, and provisions of all kinds realized fabulous prices.

But Taunton would not surrender. The Royalists were now infuriated at the extraordinary resistance, and Prince Charles marched against it with his army of 8,000 men.

Blake, with his gallant little band, had made every appeal to the Parliament for assistance, and at last General Fairfax was sent to his aid. These troops marched incessantly to assist, but before reaching Taunton it was found necessary to send back a large number to Oxford, so that only a small party reached this town. Time was now precious, and the besiegers strained every nerve to take it before the arrival of Fairfax. But Taunton men, true to the last, still maintained their own, and on the 11th May, 1645, after 55 days of siege, Goring's army withdrew. They retired to Bridgwater and other places. Blake mustered his little band, followed them, and fell upon their rear guard.

The joy of the Tauntonians now knew no bounds, they repaired to church to return thanks for their preservation; a national day of thanksgiving was ordered by Parliament to be observed; Blake, Weldon, and their soldiers were handsomely rewarded, and the siege of Taunton was the talk of the whole kingdom.

### The Siege of Taunton Renewed, 1645.

The joy of the Tauntonians on the deliverance of their beloved town appears to have been premature, for hardly had the sound of the bells ceased when the inhabitants

were called to experience all the evils of war, famine and siege for the second time. Goring, Hopton, Greville, Wyndham and Wagstaff, whose combined forces had been so unfortunate, were exasperated by the "taunton," their want of success, and determined once more to try to subdue or starve out "the obstinate town." So, before the end of May, being reinforced by a troop of horse and with above ten thousand men, they again invested Taunton with a determination "either to subdue the place or lay their bones in the trenches."

Blake, therefore, unable to maintain his outposts, withdrew into the town and again petitioned Parliament to send him assistance; in answer to which they sent him £4,000 and a troop of horse under Colonel Weldon. But sad scenes took place both in and around the neighbourhood; a beautiful country, which just before teemed with unequalled fields, meadows and orchards, was now laid waste. Fire and sword had caused the usual desolation that accompanies an army. Nor was this all, for the acts of the licentious soldiers were remembered and bore evil fruit long afterwards.

Goring's orders were imperfectly given, or misunderstood; for two of his companies mistaking each other for the enemy fell upon one another with considerable slaughter. During the confusion that ensued Weldon brought his troops safely into the town. All this time Blake was not idle; he made numerous sorties, and several with considerable success. On one occasion the Royalists lost 400 men, besides a large number taken prisoners. This compelled the besiegers to enlarge their circle, and consequently gave more liberty to Blake's little army.

But what afforded the greatest assistance to the Parliamentary cause was the interception of a note from Goring to the King, which pointed out the present position and intention of the Royal forces. Had the King received this communication as intended he would probably not have fought the battle of Naseby, and sustained so much loss and trouble.

The Royalists made no further attempt to take the town by storm, but determined to try the effect of famine. During this time the Parliament had not forgotten their promised aid, but had despatched Sir Thomas Fairfax with a small army to the relief of the distressed town.

It was during the siege that the oft-told joke was played of whipping the last poor pig around the town, that the besiegers might believe from the noise that the townsmen had received relief and provisions.

Five weeks had now elapsed since the siege had been re-commenced, and the gallant old town still held out, although much suffering from famine had been experienced.

The approach of Sir Thomas Fairfax and his troop seems to have had the effect of driving off the Royalist army, for on the 3rd July, 1645, Goring, with all his allies, broke up their camps, destroyed their huts, and marched over the Blackdown Hills; but they were not allowed to leave peaceably, for a brave little army was soon formed of townsmen, Weldon's horse, and others, who marched after them, and it is said that so disastrous was the fate of the Royalists that they lost upwards of one thousand men, besides four hundred prisoners and several hundred stand of arms.

But Taunton, though still untaken, presented a sad and dismal sight. The once wealthy and populous town endured such an amount of suffering and trial as in these happy days of peace it is difficult to picture. Large numbers of the houses lay in ruins. Fire had destroyed many more, and famine and the sword had told in a fearful manner upon many of the most illustrious families; but with the true pluck of Englishmen, the noble old town, Phoenix-like, arose from its ashes. East Beach, East-gate and East-street suffered the most, and if the title of the "Phoenix Inn" in this neighbourhood was not derived therefrom, it was most appropriate and singular.

The defence of Taunton was of national importance, for with it stood or fell the West of England. But when Charles the Second came to the throne he could not forget those towns which had caused his father so much loss and trouble. Taunton consequently forfeited her charter, and the walls were so demolished that even their very site is now unknown.

But is not our boasted and highly-prized liberty the result of this and similar contentions? Surely no country in the world now enjoys such real and true freedom as this happy land. Then let us, the descendants of those brave men, who defended this town with such heroism, see that we treasure and guard the great advantages bought at the cost of no less than the blood and privations of our noble and illustrious ancestors.

The events that took place in the noted siege were at the time celebrated in verse, of which we add a copy:—

The eleventh of May was a joyful day,  
When Taunton got relief;  
Which turned our sorrows into joy,  
And eas'd us of our grief.

The Taunton men were vallant then,  
In keeping of the town,  
While many of those, who were our foes,  
Lay gasping on the ground:

When Colonel Massey, of the same,  
Did understand aright,  
He, like a man of courage bold,  
Prepared himself to fight.



With that our soldiers, one and all,  
Cast up their caps, and cry'd,  
What need we fear what man can do,  
Since God is on our side!

Long time did Goring lie encamp'd  
Against fair Taunton town;  
He made a vow to starve us out,  
And batter our castle down.

Within our castle did remain  
(A garrison so strong)  
Those likely lads which did unto  
Our Parliament belong.

Before daylight appear'd in view  
The news to them was come,  
That Goring and his cursed crew  
Were all dispers'd and gone.

But who can tell what joy was there,  
And what content of mind,  
Was put into the hearts of those  
Who'd been so long confin'd!

Our bread was fourteen-pence per pound,  
And all things sold full dear;  
Which made our soldiers make short meals,  
And pinch themselves full near.

Our beer was eighteen-pence per quart  
(As for a truth was told);  
And butter eighteen-pence per pound  
To Christians there was sold.

The cavaliers dispers'd with fear,  
And forc'd were to run,  
On the eleventh of May, by break of day,  
Ere rising of the sun.

Let Taunton men be mindful then  
In keeping of this day:  
We'll give God praise with joy always,  
Upon th' eleventh of May.

### Monmouth's Rebellion and the Battle of Sedgemoor, A.D. 1685.

The state of tranquillity and comparative prosperity which succeeded the bloodshed and misery which we have been attempting to describe was not destined to be of long duration, for before many years elapsed civil war again desolated the land. The conduct of Charles II. and his partiality to the Church of Rome had not been all calculated to conciliate his subjects, and dissatisfaction widely prevailed throughout the country. The people were restless and impatient, and consequently were disposed to favour any efforts that seemed to promise a security of their liberty. Their choice of a leader unfortunately fell on James, Duke of Monmouth, who was said to have been a natural son of the King, and who enjoyed much of the Royal favour, although an Act was attempted to be passed to prevent his attaining the Crown.

Independently of a Royal pedigree the Duke of Mon-

mouth was favoured with youth, beauty and courage, and his attachment to the Protestant faith endeared him to the people. He had been visiting various courts on the Continent, and had collected around him many influential gentlemen. Upon being informed that the English would receive him with open arms, and that London and the West of England were ready to revolt in his favour, on the 24th May, 1685 (o.s.), he sailed from Amsterdam, and after a stormy voyage of nearly three weeks landed at Lyme Regis, where he and his followers were received with every manifestation of joy. After three days spent in preparation and in the enlistment of volunteers he issued a proclamation which set forth that he and his adherents were in arms in defence of the Protestant religion and the rights and liberties of the people of England.

Having now collected a force of upwards of 2,000 men, he marched towards Axminster, where he found that the Duke of Albemarle, the Lord-Lieutenant of Devon, with 4,000 men, was endeavouring to check his progress. Monmouth tried to attach him to his interest, but finding this useless prepared for battle. The Duke of Albemarle, considering he was at the head of undisciplined troops, refused to hazard an engagement and made a hasty retreat. Had Monmouth now followed up his advantage, he might have taken large quantities of arms and ammunition and subdued Exeter, as many of the enemy and nearly all the country were in his favour. But Monmouth marched to Taunton, where he arrived on Thursday, June 18. The streets were thronged with people, and his progress resembled a triumph. A number of the daughters of the principal inhabitants presented him with a flag, a sword and an open Bible, which he received, and stated his intention to defend (with his blood if necessary) the great truths therein contained. It was in this town that he was proclaimed King, which was done for various reasons:— 1st, to attach the gentry to his standard; 2nd, to show that he did not intend to establish a commonwealth; and 3rdly, to give protection to his followers. He next proclaimed the Parliament which was attached to King Charles to be a "seditious assembly," and the Duke of Albemarle and his adherents to be traitors unless they immediately laid down their arms.

After marching to Bridgwater, Glastonbury and other places, he attempted to take Bristol, but was repulsed. He then marched to Bath and Frome, and, being short of money and provisions, returned to Bridgwater. The King's forces followed and encamped at Sedgemoor, where Monmouth attacked them by night, and after a fierce battle was routed, more than 500 of his men perishing on the spot.

Finding all his hopes gone, he disguised himself, and with a few faithful followers rode off. He endeavoured to reach the sea coast and escape to the Continent, but on the 8th July he was taken prisoner, and, sent to London to await his trial for conspiracy and treason, was found guilty and executed. And now commenced the season of retribution and unexampled severity. The celebrated Chief Justice Jefferies and four other judges, accompanied by a troop of soldiers, were sent to the West on a special commission to try the offenders. We pass over the scenes that then took place; suffice it to say that they disgraced the King, the judges and the officers, and, happily, are seldom to be heard of in this land. After holding trials at Winchester, Salisbury, Dorchester and Exeter, they arrived at Taunton, where there were nearly 500 prisoners, many of them members of the higher families. A large proportion were found guilty, many were transported, and 19 suffered death. England had never beheld such scenes of violence, rage and cruelty under the name of law.

Thus ended Monmouth's rebellion, which, though the objects were just and virtuous, the operations were conducted without wisdom. It has been truly said that the difference between a traitor and a patriot is only in the result.

It was left for another prince to effect without bloodshed what was so unfortunately attempted by Monmouth, and the glorious revolution secured to Englishmen what they had so often striven to attain under the Stuarts—religious and constitutional liberty, freedom and government.

The historian, Oldmixon, says that the Duke was received with such general exultation at Taunton that the wits of the people seem to have flown away in their flights of joy; but a great change was soon to come o'er the scene, for when Jefferies appeared the joy was turned to sorrow. The young maids (although some were only children of eight and ten years of age) were not allowed to escape. Miss Mary Blake, as chief, was committed to Dorchester gaol, where she died. Another surrendered herself to Jefferies, and pleaded guilty. Jefferies ordered the gaoler to take her, which so alarmed the child that she also died. History informs us that James the Second, anxious to raise money, was willing to pardon the remainder on a ransom of £7,000 being paid, and that this amount was promised to the so-called Maids of Honour of the Court as a Christmas-box. The Duke of Somerset took up the matter for these ladies, and wrote several letters to Sir Francis Warre, of Hestercombe, desiring him to engage a suitable person to take the children into custody, prosecute them for high treason,

and then compound for a ransom. Sir Francis declined the business, but nevertheless several sums were actually paid.

### A few Notes on the Town.

In giving an account of the borough of Taunton there are a number of facts that ought not to be left unnoticed, and yet we hardly know under what heading they should be classed, they are so various. We propose to run through them on the present occasion. In the year 1869 the late Mr. F. R. Clarke, who was a clever writer and an old and attached friend to the town, published a little pamphlet on the subject. This contained much information never before in print, and was written in a pleasant, running style. We extract from it the following:—

Taunton, the county town of Somersetshire, is situated in the most fertile part of a tract of land known as the "Vale of Taunton Deane." It is a good market town and an ancient parliamentary borough, 163 miles south-west by west of London, and lying a little way south of the Taunton station, on the Bristol and Exeter line of railway. Coming from the station towards the town, the traveller will observe a fine range of hills against the southern sky. These constitute the Blackdown range, on one of which above the town of Wellington, 9 miles from Taunton, stands a monument, a triangular obelisk, erected in the year 1816. Taunton is situate on the Tone. The river is not now navigable except for about half a mile below the bridge; and the traffic to and fro is barely sufficient to keep down the growth of water weeds, which in some places impede the path of the rowers, row they never so deftly. The river itself is, or is said to be, under the guardianship of certain commissioners called Conservators, who admirably fulfil the purpose for which they are appointed, by going to Bridgwater once a-year by canal. From the right hand side of the bridge a part of Taunton Castle is seen, and particularly an elegant little tower of the period of Edward III. peers above the poplars that fringe the right bank of the river. We propose to conduct our visitor around the town. He will observe the new market cross, standing on steps and erected by the Kinglake family. It is thus inscribed:—

Patris: admodum: dilecti:  
Neonon: matris: carissime:  
In: piam: memoriam:  
1867.

In order, however, to combine the *utile* (useful) with the *dulce* (ornamental), the structure carries a drinking-fountain also. On the right is the church of St. Mary Magdalene, a noble structure of Perpendicular Gothic, with a splendid west tower, lately built in *fac-simile* of the one pulled down in the year 1858. The niches in

the west front are filled with sculptured full length figures of SS. Peter and Paul (the patron saints of the Priory) and the four Evangelists; on the south side by SS. Mary Magdalene, James and Andrew; and on the north side by the Archangel Michael and St. George. Over the south porch is a representation of the crucifixion; and inside the porch, over the door, is a small figure of St. John the Baptist. On the left of the Parade is the site of the old market cross, and from thence we get a fine view of High-street. At the top is a pretty meadow dotted with trees, bordered by a stream, and called Vivary Park. Turning to the right we get a site of the Shire Hall, opened for business at the Lent Assizes in 1858, with its courts of assize, grand jury room, judges' chambers, and ornamental grounds, in which stands a cannon brought from the Crimea—a memento of the war. Above the entrance are the famous words from Magna Charta—

*Nullo vendemus, nullo negabimus, aut differemus rectum vel justitiam.\**

In the large vestibule of the Shire Hall are marble busts commemorative of Somersetshire worthies: the renowned Admiral Blake, the pious Bishop Ken, the loyal Byam, whose nine sons nobly perished for their king, the philosophical John Locke, the sturdy John Pym, the learned Thomas Young, and the adventurous Captain Speke.

Through the grounds we get into St. John's-road, where stands a noble church in honour of St. John the Evangelist, built a few years since in the style known as Early English, and surmounted by a lofty spire. This is a monument of the munificence of the Rev. F. J. Smith, the incumbent. Again approaching the centre of the town we come to an establishment of nuns, in the occupation of a house known as Paul's House, the site of an old monastery dedicated to St. Paul. The nuns are few in number, and are of the Order of Perpetual Adoration. Keeping round by their wall on the left hand, we get into a quarter called Tangier, which is so named from a regiment of Colonel Kirk's being billeted there after Monmouth's rebellion (temp. James II.). Colonel Kirk served some time in Tangier in Africa, and was a fitting tool to carry out the barbarous Judge Jefferies' decisions against the unfortunate rebels. In this region are the gas works, which, by way of compensation for the deeds of darkness emanating from this quarter in that day, now flood at night our streets and shops with clear, unfading, cheerful light, with a profit to the shareholders of six or seven per cent. *Ex fumo dare lucem.* Passing through where once stood the West Gate, we find ourselves in Castle Green, a large open space, so called because there is no green about it. In the immediate

locality remains of the elk, rein-deer and rhinoceros have been found—a curious circumstance, showing either that these animals, which now only exist in such very varying regions, were at one time more indifferent to the climate than their degenerate descendants are, or that the weather was more genial and tolerant then now. On the north side of the green, castle-square, tilting yard, or whatever it was, stands nearly all that there now is of the castle. The Bishops of Winchester have from time immemorial—that is to say, from the time of Ethelard, king of the West Saxons, about the year 720, until the reign of George the Fourth, in 1822, a period of 1,100 years—been lords of the manor and castle of Taunton. They appointed the constables of the castle, their bailiffs or stewards of the borough, their reeves or keepers of the town gates, their searchers of green skins, their shamble inspectors, and their rhine-riders; and these, with some other officers, constituted the Court Leet, and were for many generations the ruling powers of the place—a curious corporation, and rather a remarkable one.

Mr. Clarke then comments on various matters that would interest a visitor. He says that the church of St. James is of older foundation than its statelier sister, St. Mary's, and the tower, until it was lately pulled about so by man and in great part dilapidated by time, was one of the most beautiful structures you shall see again in a long day's march. Speaking of St. Mary's Church, he remarks that the north aisle is said to be very old, coeval with, if not prior to, the Priory itself; but the main portions of the church are probably not older than the time of Richard III. or Henry VII., viz., from 1483 to 1490. Masses of carved stone work were found among the debris of the old tower pulled down in 1858, some of which were deposited in the Museum, and indicate, of course, the existence of a still older tower than the late one, which, they say, was certainly erected in Henry VII.'s reign. The tower carries a noble set of eight bells, which fill the town and neighbourhood with joyful melody when they are rung at weddings and on other happy occasions. Tunes also are played by machinery upon the bells, not altogether satisfactorily to a musical ear, but still far from producing an unpleasant effect at a distance. On Sunday, Handel's psalm tune, "Hanover;" on Monday and Tuesday, "The Last Rose of Summer;" on Wednesday and Thursday, "The Highland Laddie;" and on Friday and Saturday, "My Lodging is on the Cold Ground." The church has five aisles, which is of itself an uncommon thing, there being only five such churches, I am told, in all England. There are twelve noble clerestory windows and a rich east window; there is a fine organ; the benches are low and uniform, but disfigured at their ends

\*To none will we sell, to none deny, nor will we depart from truth and justice.

by immense poppy heads, which have the effect of detracting from the apparent height of the church, and cease to be ornamental by reason of their profusion. The font is elegant, and the altar arrangements have more beauty about them than was apparent a few months ago, a sculptured reredos from designs by Mr. Street, an elevated chancel floor, and raised chancel arches making the sanctuary somewhat bright and glorious, instead of dark and mean as it was before. New windows have lately been placed over the chancel arches, in the place of some small ones which for many years past had been walled up. The church does not contain many monuments of note, but amongst them are:—A brass to the celebrated Joseph Alleyne; a tablet to the memory of Thomas Moore, who purchased the Priory property after the destruction of the building; and a full-sized effigy of Robert Grey. Mr. Clarke tells the following story of the late celebrated Dr. Buckland, dean of Westminster, who visited the church when he came to Taunton at the starting of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society:—A clergyman who walked beside him remarked that the niches in the tower would be better filled with figures of saints than remain empty. The dean shook his head, exclaiming, "Popery, my dear sir, Popery; ah, it would never do!" On going round the interior of the church, however, afterwards, he stopped before our friend Grey's effigy, in which the old gentleman is represented in aldermanic vestments, and remarked that Grey was a good man, and he was quite glad to see such a monument to his memory. "Ah, doctor," exclaimed the wicked clergyman, "you don't mind sinners being set up inside a church, but grudge that saints should be outside the tower!" And so our late friend runs on in his pleasant, chatty style, and adds much more which space does not permit us to embrace; but let us advise all those who would wish further information to purchase the little book for themselves.

### A Stroll through Taunton, and a Peep into Odd Corners.

The impression upon a stranger on his first visit to our ancient borough will be, doubtless, that Taunton is a highly-respectable, nice, clean, quiet town. If he is acquainted with his country's history he will remember probably the account of the attempt of Perkin Warbeck to enter the place, of the celebrated defence of Taunton under the noted Blake, of the visit of Monmouth, and of the misadventures that followed. If he is connected with commerce and manufactures, he may be reminded of the flourishing trade that existed here in the woollen and serge department; or if he is of an antiquarian turn, he

must think of the Castle of Taunton, the two beautiful churches and towers of St. Mary's and St. James', or of the past glories of Taunton Priory and church, or of the monastery of the Carmelites.

But whatever the stranger's first impressions may have been, he will eventually find Taunton a well-governed and thoroughly-healthy place, the resort of a large number of persons who desire a comfortable residence on economical terms. He will find the inhabitants of the town generally sociable, quietly disposed, and attached to their old borough. But if he were to ask them to give him some particulars respecting their town, and of its history past and present, he would find many of them knew very little about it. We propose to offer our services as guide, and to conduct our visitor through our highways and byeways, pointing out places of interest, but omitting any description of those already described elsewhere.

Among the many attractions that formerly commanded attention in Taunton were the beautifully-clear streams running through its streets—at once the admiration of strangers, the pride of the inhabitants, often of great use to the poor, and serviceable in case of fire. It does not reflect much credit on our governing bodies that these good things are lost to the town.

We will, then, consider our visitor as just arrived at our railway-stations, which are on the north side of the town. He will find that the increased business of the Bristol and Exeter Company has demanded larger premises, and will, probably, hear that new stations have been lately erected. Close at hand is Plais-street, so called from the Roman-road passing near. A fine view of the town may be obtained before we leave this part. As we enter the Kingston-road we notice Bowbarton—an outlying district of St. James's parish—on the north side, and which has two small chapels and a school. Passing under the aqueduct which connected the Great Western and Bridgwater Canals, we observe on the right the Flock estate and old mansion, with beautiful grounds, the seat of the Metford family. We are now in North Town, formerly a place of importance, unconnected with Taunton, and which still retains its own fair. If we turn to the right we observe the road to the towns on the Northern coast and West Somerset. Some capital nursery grounds, into which the public are admitted, next deserve attention. Beyond is "Fairwater," for many years a large asylum; but now there are fine school buildings erected for the Independents, 1869. Retracing our steps by the turnpike, we notice Flock-terrace and the old well, and read the curious inscription thereon. Approaching the town, on the right side we pass what was formerly the "Yarde Estate" (occupied by the Halliday family), and

which contains some beautiful avenues and walks, all now destroyed by the march of modern building improvements. Here we find Pollard's building and timber works, and observe saws busily engaged in the manipulation of wood and stone. Proceeding onwards through Bridge-street, we cross the river Tone, and soon get a view of the centre of the town. Passing up through North-street we notice an Independent Chapel, and extensive school-buildings. The old mill bow and river-fall also demand our inspection. Arrived at the Castle Hotel—a first-class house of "entertainment both for man and beast"—we are now at the Parade—a fine, open, airy space (surrounded by the best shops)—an ornament to the town and the admiration of all strangers, and which is thus described by a townsman—

"This broad Parade, for light and air designed,  
Attests wise counsel, and a taste refined.  
Our ancient worthies spared not house nor land,  
But sacrificed them both with open hand."

Here on Saturdays are held the markets, portable standings being pitched for that purpose. At the southern end is the Market House, which contains good Assembly and other rooms; on the western side is the Taunton and Somerset Institution and the Somersetshire Archaeological Museum, and beneath extensive meat markets. Next stands Stuckey's Bank, re-erected about ten years ago. A few doors above we observe the site of the old Town Hall and Town Council Chambers, which contained some curious plaster-work and carvings, &c. Opposite we observe what was formerly the "Old White Hart," now converted into business premises. Adjoining are a few old gabled houses, in front of which was formerly the market cross, and then we come to, perhaps, the finest ancient front we possess, long occupied by the Turle family, but formerly the town residence of the Portmans. The next houses, too, possess a claim to notice; also some fine old carved woodwork at the entrance of the Crown and Mitre-court. It was close at this point that about ten years ago an old house was taken down that had been erected from the ruins of one of the old Taunton churches, destroyed, probably, about the time of the Reformation, and supposed to have been that of St. Paul's. A few doors further on brings us to the Wilts and Dorset new Bank, the beautiful front of which has lately been erected with great taste. Crossing over we observe the South Wales Bank, a building of considerable architectural pretensions.

At late Henderson's is a fine old fire-place of mediæval character, lately restored with good effect.

We now come to Hammet-street, which contains offices of various associations and companies, including the Post and Telegraph Offices, Probate Court, and offices

of the Taunton Water, Somerset and Devon, and West Somerset Railway Companies. Our attention does not require to be drawn towards St. Mary's Tower and Church, for no stranger can behold them without feelings of admiration, if not of astonishment. Adjoining are the schools of St. Mary's parish. On the north-east of the church is the vicarage, and on the north side of Hammet-street were some old almshouses, with a chapel attached; these once formed part of the front of the only carriage entrance to the church.

We now propose to conduct our readers on a ramble through the western side of our old town. Entering Bishop's Hull parish through Castle Green, under the noble old arches on which once hung the ponderous gates of the porter's lodge, we observe the ancient Grammar School on our left, and a snug and comfortable inn, named "Clarke's Hotel," on our right, with a billiard-room attached, which latter, with a modern fire-engine station, materially disfigure the appearance of Taunton Castle, which is on the north side and has been already described.

The Castle Green is said to have been formerly the burial-place attached to the Castle; but although many human remains have been found there, we think there is much doubt of the fact. On the south side we observe the cattle market, in which are held the bi-monthly sales of live stock, &c.

Leaving the *Somerset County Gazette* printing offices on our right, and crossing the river Tone, we enter "Tangier," said to be so named because some soldiers, who were quartered at Taunton, and who had just returned from Tangiers, in Africa, here lay encamped. This locality consists of a large number of small houses, occupied by the poor. Here are also an iron house, used as a school, a room fitted up for the use of a chapel, and the Taunton Gas-works. There are also several breweries, malthouses, &c. The whole district appears to be built on the filled-up bed of a mountain torrent.

We return through "Tower-lane"—why so called we have never yet discovered, unless it be from the fact that previous to the Reformation the church (and, probably, tower) of St. Paul's stood near this spot. Adjoining was also formerly a residence of the Carmelite Friars. We next reach St. John's Church—a splendid erection, lately built by the liberality of the Rev. F. J. Smith. This church and spire claim our careful attention, and justly reflect credit upon the generosity of the donor and the skill of those who so ably carried out the work. Tower House, in Park-street, built from the fragments of old St. Mary's tower, is next to be noticed; also a beautiful brick-built villa, in the Gothic style, at the entrance to the

Bishop's Hull-road. Passing Park-terrace—a pleasant row of modern houses—we proceed westward, and reach what was formerly the Dissenters' Proprietary College.

A little beyond we see the Taunton Cemetery—a beautiful spot, very nicely kept. On the opposite side we observe the cricket and archery ground, where during the summer months the various matches and balls take place. This is also used as the exercise ground for the 1st Somerset Militia. The Galmington fields contain some very pleasant rural walks, and are favourites with the Taunton people.

Entering Wilton parish, we observe the Taunton Eye Infirmary, for many years under the care of Dr. Billett.

Proceeding up the Honiton-road we pass Belmont, the beautiful grounds of J. Marshall, Esq. Opposite was Mount Nebo, now destroyed.

Close by Wheatley Cross, the residence of H. Badcock, Esq., we notice the narrow, steep, old lane leading to the hamlet of Galmington, which certainly does not look much like the main road to Exeter and the West of England; but such was formerly the case, as an old map in our possession will prove. At the foot of this lane stands old Ramshorn bridge, well worthy a visit, and which has caused considerable discussion respecting its supposed age.

Numerous villas have lately sprung up on the Hovelands Estate. The Highlands, the residence of Edwards Beadon, Esq., is a pretty residence on a fine spot.

A little further on the Trull-road we notice the Wesleyan Collegiate Institution, a handsome building in the Tudor style of architecture, erected in the year 1852. Here, under able masters, a large number of youths are educated and prepared to fight the battle of life.

A pretty walk through the fields brings us to "Batts," where the rustic old bridge and stream and the beautiful ornamental trees deserve our passing notice.

We now arrive at the hamlet of Sherford, and, proceeding through green lanes, reach Wilton Church, near the supposed site of St. George's Well. Passing down Wilton-street, we come to the Somerset County Gaol—an extensive pile of massive buildings, suitable to such a large county as ours. On the north side we notice one of the "Lions of Taunton"—the beautiful Shire Hall—erected in the year 1854 for the transaction of the business of the county. Here are also held the assizes, the county courts, the sessions, and the barristers' courts, the total cost of the buildings we understand to have been £25,000.

Passing over Shuttern, or South Town Bridge (now lost to sight), we enter the parish of St. Mary Magdalene, and notice on the south the Crescent, a row of modern brick houses, erected in the year 1806. At the higher end are the buildings formerly used as a Roman Catholic Chapel and schools, and facing the St. Paul's or the Crescent field.

Wilton House and grounds deserve our notice. The Vivary Park, being very open and airy, and ornamented with water, would make an excellent pleasure and recreation place for the people when the Board of Health have a few thousands they have no particular use for. On the opposite side we pass "The Temple," the large and handsome chapel of the Wesleyans, and adjoining are extensive mills, where for many years a large business was carried on in the silk trade.

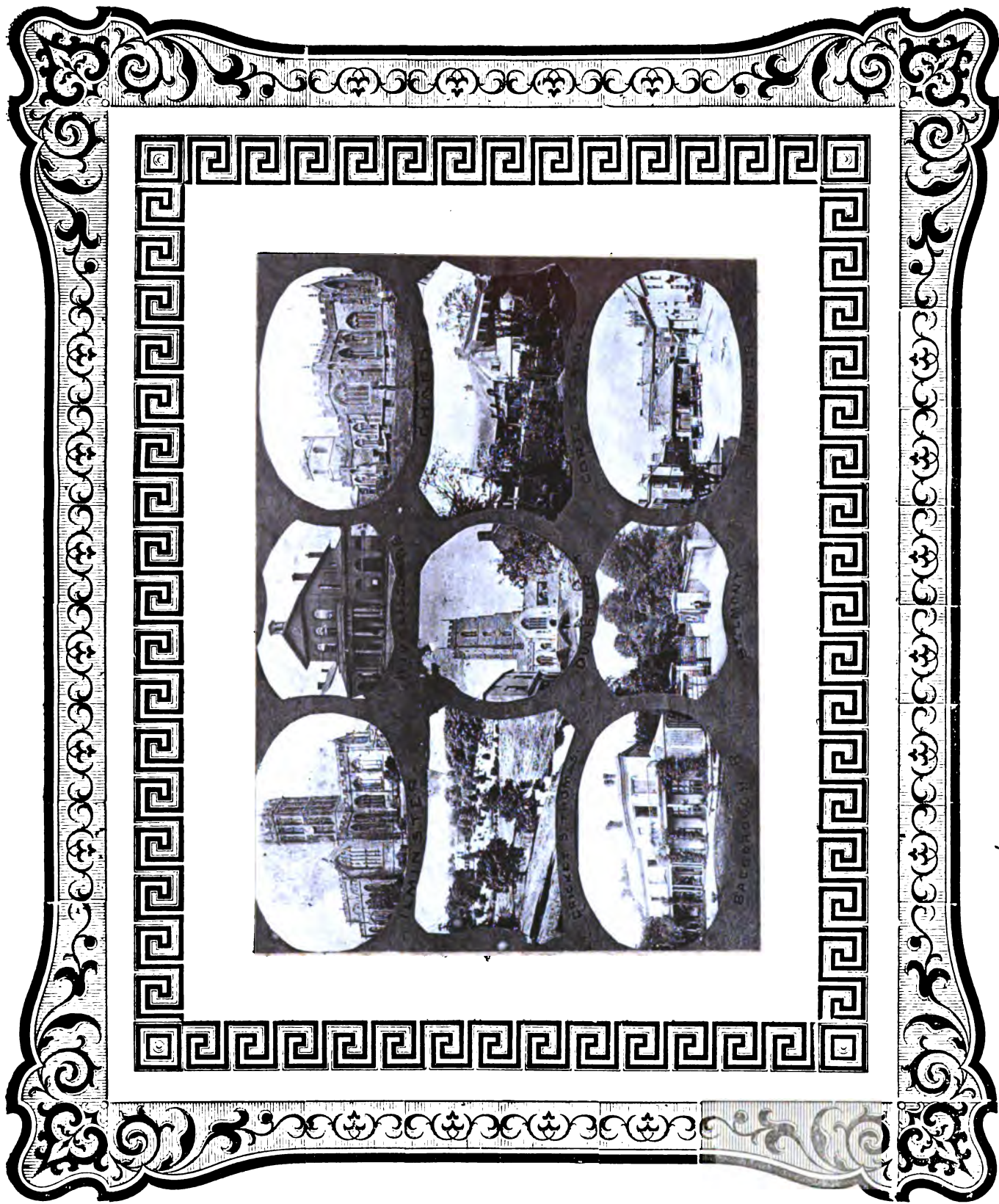
The courts behind the High-street run back a considerable distance, and contain many houses. Behind Blake and Hatcher's extensive drapery establishment is the pig market; and a stroll down Batt's-court leads us into Fore-street; but before leaving we remember that it was here that was once pulled down an old house, which was erected with the fragments of some fine old ecclesiastical building of this town, for moulded jambs and polished shafts were indiscriminately worked up in the solid wall.

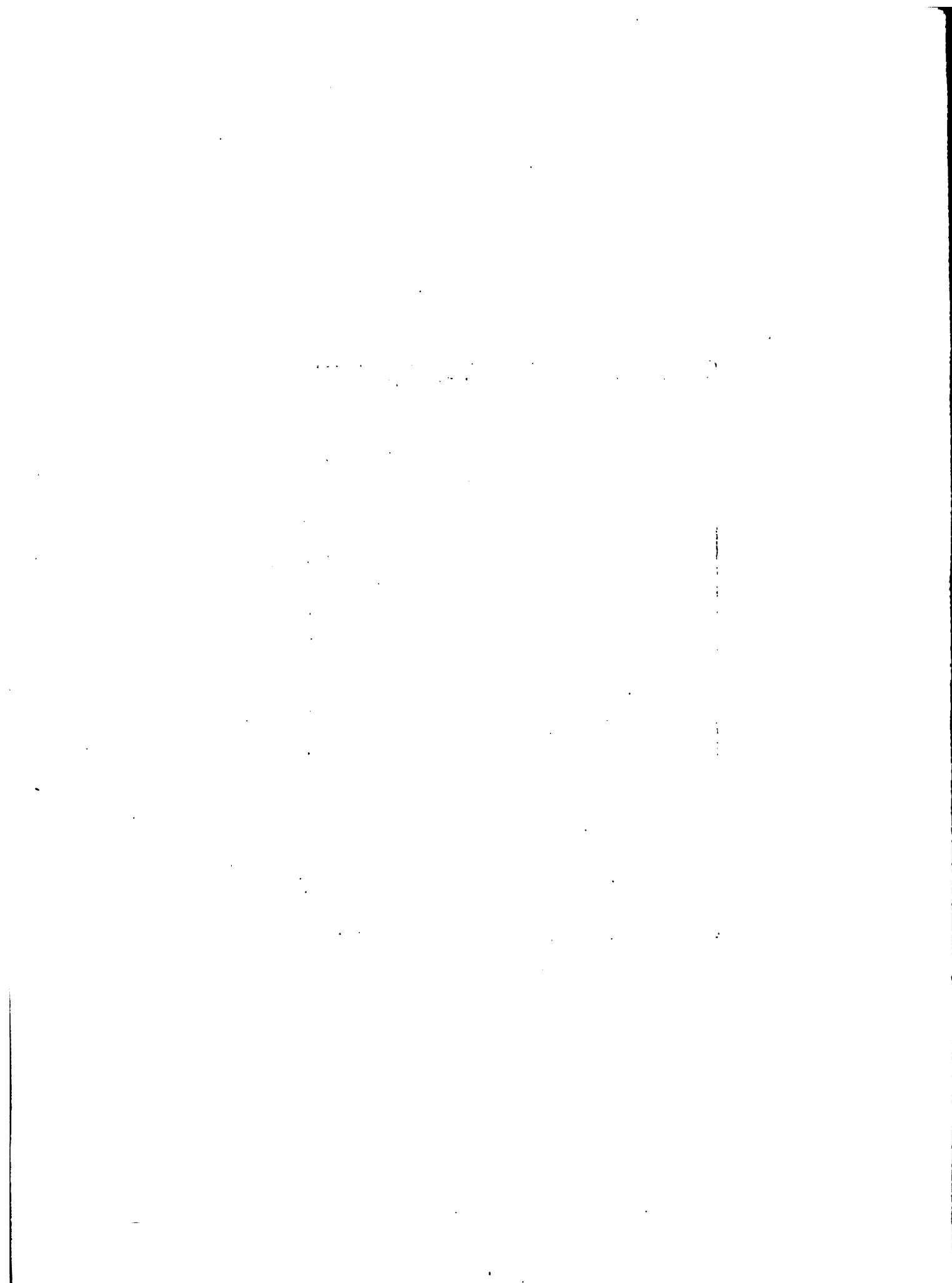
We will now ask our readers to accompany us in a southerly and easterly direction while we point out anything of interest on our route.

Leaving Fore-street, we enter Paul-street, as it is now called, although we presume it was originally named Saint Paul's-street. Probably when the Independents erected Paul's Meeting House they dropped the title of reverence, not being partial to saints or confessors. This street, unlike most of our other streets, is steep and narrow. The first building we notice is the Magistrates' Office, and then the new Vestry Hall of St. Mary's parish, erected in the year 1862 by the overseers with some money that then unexpectedly fell into their hands. Here the poor are weekly paid, and the various vestry meetings of the parish are held. A few yards above, on the opposite side, there was formerly a place of business, where for many years an extensive trade was done in the carrying department; and we remember many a time seeing Brice's caravans, with six horses, come in from Bristol on their way to Exeter, accompanied by "a jolly waggoner" mounted on his little pony. At a house about half way up the street, on the eastern side, the Taunton Mechanics' Institute was established about thirty years ago, which has had its day, and is now numbered among the things of the past. At the top of the street are Paul's Chapel and also the new Memorial Hall, the latter erected in the year 1862 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the sect of Independents in this town, and the establishment of their place of worship. Opposite the chapel stands the parsonage, the residence of the minister of the congregation.

As we enter Mary-street we may observe the original Infant School, founded in 1828, where a large number of







children of tender age receive the rudiments of education. Adjoining are the buildings of the Taunton Brewery, and to the west we find the Unitarian Chapel, behind which, cut out of the hill, may be found an ice-house.

To the south is Mount-street or, as it is sometimes called, Barrack-street, which is inconveniently narrow. Several attempts have been made to get it widened, but as a small amount of traffic takes place there the improvement has constantly been postponed. The houses on the western side face Vivary Park, and have a pleasant prospect. They were chiefly erected by the late William Kinglake, Esq. About half-way up, on the eastern side, are "The Barracks," now used for the 1st Somerset Militia, the Pensioners, and occasionally by the Rifle Corps. On the opposite side is a large, low house, formerly occupied by the "Princites"—a sect, we trust, that will soon be forgotten, but whose doings caused no small sensation in their day. They afterwards removed to larger premises, near Enmore, in the neighbourhood of Bridgewater. This street, as well as Mount-terrace, contains some good houses, which are occupied by private families. The long, enclosed roadway leading to "The Mount" was formerly a pleasant open path through green fields. It was at the Mount that the trustees of the markets many years ago sunk and bored a well to a great depth, in the hope of getting a large flow of water to supply the wants of the markets and the inhabitants. Passing through the field, in which are held the various circuses that visit this town, a few steps to the east leads us to St. George's Church and the priest's residence, erected in the year 1860, on a fine and commanding site. Billet-street is waiting for purchasers, and offers a good spot for a number of private villas.

The London Hotel is an inn of considerable importance, and is noted throughout the West of England for its comforts. About twenty years ago it was attacked by an electioneering mob, and a large number of windows were broken. It was formerly called the Three Cups. The large Assembly-rooms of this hotel do credit to our town, and are worth a view. The next place worthy of notice will be Stevens' cabinet manufactory, which will repay the visit of a stranger. Passing the Inland Revenue and Tax Offices, on the opposite side, we observe the house where for nearly half a century the *Taunton Courier* was printed and published by the late Mr. J. W. Marriott, and on the other side of the way stood until lately some old houses, which were decorated with several very handsome ornaments in plasterwork, some of which were removed to the Somersetshire Archaeological Society's Museum, and appear to have been the Royal Arms of Henry 7th, if we remember rightly. We next arrive at the offices of the

Board of Health. The Board meet in a fine, lofty room, originally built by the late Mr. Charles Harman for a music hall.

That part called East Gate was formerly narrow, and contained the eastern gate of the town; and here it will be remembered so much fighting took place in the time of the Civil War. An account of Pope's and Gray's almshouses, which are on the south side, will be found elsewhere.

The old town mansion of the Lethbridge family stood near the present silk factory, where a large number of young people are now employed in the manufacture and throwing of silk; but the silk trade of Taunton is much reduced from what it was formerly, when many families derived their living from it.

On entering Silver-street we observe a granite monument, intended for a drinking fountain. On the east side of this street formerly stood the theatre, which was built in 1800 by Mr. Lee, and which for many years was worked by a band of actors in connection with the theatre of Bath and under the management of various gentlemen. The building was pulled down about twenty years ago. The Baptist Chapel next claims our notice, behind which some extensive buildings for educational purposes have lately been erected.

The Convent stands upon commanding ground, and was originally intended for a county hospital. The foundation-stone was laid with Masonic honours by Lord North, amid great pomp and ceremony, in the year 1772; but it was found that sufficient means could not be obtained to complete the building and establish this excellent charity. When Dr. Toulmin published the first history of Taunton the building was then, and had for years been, in an unfinished state; and loudly does that worthy Tauntonian lament its fate. In 1807 it was occupied by a society of Nuns, of the order of St. Francis, who emigrated from Brussels. Since that time it has constantly increased in extent, a beautiful new chapel having lately been added, and large sums of money having been expended within the few past years.

Opposite the Convent are the Taunton brick-yards, which, although not extensive, are noted for the fine quality of the goods manufactured there.

Descending the hill, we observe some pleasant, open fields, formerly often the scenes of great excitement, as they were used for many years for the Taunton race-course. They are now covered by villas and the college.

Continuing our peregrinations in Trinity district, we arrive at Alma-street—a new road, which was laid out about fifteen years since through a field between Silver and South-streets by the Conservative Land Society, and a considerable portion of the new street has since been

formed, and named after the celebrated battle of Alma, which was fought about the time of its commencement. Perhaps it would be interesting to our readers to be told how such similar streets are built. Well, then, Messrs. Longhead and Deeppurse purchase (by the acre) a suitable field, and forthwith lay out a road, and advertise "This eligible building land for sale," whereupon John Stitchesole, Thomas Darncoat, William Splitandab and Joseph Makechips, being fully persuaded that with a collected capital of something under perhaps £50, and with little or no experience, they are in a position to build some "capital cottage residences" at about one half the usual amount, and "which cannot fail to prove a most profitable investment," forthwith apply to Mr. Bindemtight, the lawyer, and in the short space of a month or so 20 yards of perforated brick wall spring up, which gives the promise of what is so temptingly described in the auction handbill that soon follows as a number of "brick-built carcasses." Why the auction was necessary "deponent sayeth not." A speculator buys the lot at a low rate, and finishes them; and the unfortunate tradesmen who supplied the materials sustain a great loss, and so the old saying is again verified, that "Fools build houses for wise men to live in."

South-street was formerly called Holway-lane, and led to the hamlet of that name, or, as it has since supposed to have been anciently named, Old Way. There is some reason to suppose that a British road ran in this direction. Some Roman coins were found at Holway in the year 1820. They were of silver, of the following Emperors:—Constance, A.D. 337; Jullien, 360; Iovean, 363, &c., &c., and others. At the lower end of South-street is a long row of almshouses (described elsewhere). Opposite Alma-street is an old building, formerly used for the British Schools, but given up for that purpose about 30 years ago. Adjoining is an extensive factory, where for many years a large business in the silk trade was carried on; but it is now vacant. We are glad, however, to observe that although the silk trade is so reduced, other branches of trade giving employment to the poor, especially to females, are being introduced into our town. A few yards above leads us to the new British Schools, where a large number of the children of our working classes enjoy the advantages of a sound education that was formerly unattainable even by the higher classes. Proceeding, we observe the old Gas Works, built A.D. 1821; but the manufacture of gas has not been carried on here for about 30 years. Turning towards the East, we observe the Taunton Union Workhouse, where about 400 poor people from 40 different parishes are lodged. Adjoining is the church of the Holy Trinity, and some excellent school-buildings, erected about the year 1850 by the Rev.

F. J. Smith, who was then the incumbent of the district. The neighbourhood around the church, although now covered with numbers of new streets, consisted of green fields but about 30 years ago. In Victoria-street we observe a small chapel of the Wesleyans, erected for the use of members of that body in the Eastern part of the town. A new front was added and considerable improvements were made in the year 1861.

In this vicinity, on the eastern side, are the Poor Fields, the rents of which are appropriated to the use of the poor of Taunton for ever.

In "Pugley's Field" was for some time held the cattle markets.

Leycroft House is in West Monkton, and gives the only vote for that parish for the borough of Taunton. Adjoining was formerly the old turnpike-gate. The fine open road we now observe leads to Bridgwater, Langport, Wells and Ilminster, &c. On the north side is a pretty walk to Bathpool, through the old London road, as it is called. It was doubtless formerly the main entrance to the town, and has been supposed to be the Roman road; but this is probably incorrect. Some portions are paved with large stones. The hedge trees having been allowed to luxuriate, a romantic effect is produced.

Returning towards the town we cannot help noticing a number of dilapidated cottages, vulgarly called "Cabbage Row," occupied by poor people. We are informed they are held upon what is called key-hold tenure—that the original owners have disappeared, and the tenants remained in possession, and at death, or wishing to leave, they sell the key to the highest bidder, who thereby retains possession for his time.

We next observe some very ancient buildings, with high thatched roofs, and an open piazza in the front, and shall probably be told they are the West Monkton almshouses; but this old place was erected in the year 1269, by Thomas Lambright, a Taunton merchant, as a leper house, at a time when that foul disease was far more prevalent than in these latter days.

The old road adjoining is called "Mill Lane," and leads to the river, and the site of where formerly stood the "To-bridge Mills;" hence its name. Tradition says that formerly this road ran all the way to Fyrland and Hestercombe. It now forms the boundary of the borough, and also divides the parishes of West Monkton and Taunton St. James. Turning to the North, near Windcort-terrace, we notice Somerset-place or Alfred-street, which requires no particular observation.

We remember it was in East Beach (and probably particularly on the north side) that such injury was done at the time of the siege. The Taunton and Somerset Hospital

is a large, but we cannot say handsome building; but, if it is not ornamental, no establishment has a greater claim to the title of useful. Extra subscriptions are at present greatly required to meet its increasing liabilities. Union-place, opposite, is a collection of small houses; but as there is no thoroughfare they are little known. Gadd's Court is one of the few rows of old buildings that are now left to us which were standing before the civil war. Nearly opposite South-street is the old St. James' Poor-house, now turned into workshops and stables. Proceeding up the East Reach hill and turning towards the North brings us to Harmony-row and Concord-place, which surely ought to be the abode of peaceful and musical people. They were built by the late Mr. Charles Harman (for some years organist of St. Mary's Church); hence their names. The sheep-market was at one time held here.

We are now in the manufacturing quarter of the town, and successively pass a large silk mill, a fellmongery yard and woolstapery establishment, an extensive tanyard and bark depôt; and here was formerly a pottery for the manufacture of red ware, and also, at another time, a large iron foundry. Part of the district is yet called Foundry-place.

King-street is a collection of rows of houses, occupied by the working classes. A large portion has lately been rebuilt. On the East they are open to the fields. Opposite King-street was formerly a burial-place belonging to a Dissenting denomination which seceded in 1732 from Paul's Meeting. A chapel was erected here at the above-named time, but taken down in 1815, being decayed. A mason's yard now occupies the site! The street is called "Tancred-street;" but why such a queer name was given it we cannot say, but presume it must be a corruption of some other word. The Ebenezer Chapel has been rebuilt, and is occupied by a sect of Bible Christians. Magdalene-street is the name of a new roadway lately opened by the Board of Health in place of Black Boy-lane, and leads to St. Mary's Church. The Board of Health's yard and the depôt of the Fire Brigade are here established. The site of Burton-square is occupied by Huish's almshouses, in lieu of some very small and inconvenient ones in Hammet-street.

Canon-street, so called from its connection with Taunton Priory, was formerly an aristocratic quarter, but is now far otherwise. The Roman Catholics had for some time a place of worship here. Middle-street, to the west of Canon-street, is a quiet neighbourhood, and contains the Octagon Chapel (now occupied by a branch of the Brethren), and the Registry Office of the Taunton Union. At the north end of Canon-street is Priory-gate, and a short walk leads us to Taunton Priory.

In St. James's-street some old almshouses first attract our attention. Then we observe the site of the beautiful tower of the parish church, a description of which has already been given. Opposite is the incumbent's house, and on the North the St. James's School-room. Passing Coal Orchard (why so called we know not) we observe the wires of the Electric Telegraph Companies, which happen to meet at this point. Opposite St. James's Academy is an old house where some curious carving and plaster work may be seen. A factory, several iron foundries, and many coal-wharves are also here, for at one time in this then narrow, inconvenient street a large portion of the heavy trade of the town was carried on.

### Roads.

One of the first and most important features in a country when newly occupied is the construction of good roads; and they form a pretty sure index of the state of trade and civilisation. In the neighbourhood of this town the roads are now generally very good; but it was far otherwise some years ago, for we are informed that when application was made for the first Act of Parliament for the formation of the Taunton Turnpike Trust it was opposed by the member for Exeter, but supported by Thomas Prouse, Esq., M.P., who put the House of Commons in a roar of laughter by undertaking to prove that the roads were in so bad a state that it would be as easy to make them navigable as to fit them for carriages.

The first highways worthy the name of roads in this neighbourhood were doubtless constructed by the Romans. The peculiarity of the construction of these roads was that they were generally as straight as they could be cut, and that little or no attention was paid to hills. There seems some doubt whether the Romans ever occupied Taunton; but it is certain that there were camps in the surrounding hills, and roads were therefore necessary from one settlement to another.

We have the authority of Collinson for saying that a Roman road ran from Exmoor Forest through Taunton to Portishead on the Bristol Channel, and the old road near Bathpool is supposed by many to be the Roman road above referred to. It does not answer the requirements before stated, and probably the road referred to by Collinson is now totally destroyed.

There is also another peculiarity worth noticing respecting the roads formed by the Romans, which is, that the term "street" was generally applied to them, and the name of any ancient place thus terminating would seem to denote the probability of there having been a Roman road adjoining.

A Roman road probably existed in the neighbourhood of Taunton, or, as it was written, *Thonodunum*, or the town

upon the Tone. This road would probably have led to Castle-Neroche—an undoubted Roman camp. There is a place called "Badger-street," in a direct line between Taunton and Neroche, which would confirm the idea.

Near the railway-station is Plais-street—an undoubted Roman term, signifying a house by a Roman road or street. There can be no doubt that many of the Roman roads were converted into those now in use, and consequently their peculiarities were destroyed.

After the Romans left Britain little progress was made in road-making for upwards of 1,000 years. Bridle-paths, narrow and dark in summer and in winter almost impassable from water, ice and snow, were the only substitutes for roads in the "good old times."

As the trains of pack-horses, with their heavy loads and jingling-bells, were superseded by wheeled carriages, better roads were necessary; but how to make them was an unsolved problem. It is a fact worth noticing that all the ancient roads were deeply sunk below the surrounding lands, doubtless caused by the rain constantly washing away the soft and muddy bottom, for we find that the softer the soil the deeper the roads.

The law compelled the neighbours and adjoining land-owners to devote a certain number of days each year to the cleaning up of the highways; but we hear little as to repair, a removal of accumulated filth being considered sufficient.

There are yet numerous ancient unused roads within a few miles of the town, and many a pleasant ride have we enjoyed in exploring them. After a very few years' disuse the banks slip in, the bushes grow to trees, and ferns, thorns and brambles challenge the courage of the traveller. Many of these roads are used only as entrances to fields; some have been converted into withy-beds and gardens; others actually have had houses built upon them, and some of them have notices affixed threatening the rigour of the law to those who are bold enough to enforce the rights of the public.

We have mentioned that the introduction of wheeled carriages in lieu of pack-horses necessitated better and wider roads. History informs us that when Queen Elizabeth made her progress through this country she was accompanied by a number of rustics, whose duty it was to dig out the carriages, and to bear them upon their shoulders as occasion required; that an upset was a very ordinary occurrence, and death by drowning was not unknown, in consequence of the floods the roads were liable to. Added to this, when we remember the number of highwaymen and footpads that infested our roads, we are not surprised that our forefathers made their wills before setting out on a journey.

To obtain the necessary powers to improve the various roads and highways, the governing bodies of towns and cities applied for Acts of Parliament to empower them to levy tolls upon passengers. The inhabitants of Taunton appear very early to have seen the importance of "mending their ways;" for in the 17th year of the reign of Edward IV. they applied to Parliament for an Act to pave the various streets. But it seems that the contemplated improvement was confined to the town, and the repairs were made by laying large stones or flints on end, similar to what may be seen in some parts of the old Bathpool-lane. This was the usual method before the introduction of the improvements made by McAdam and others. When we consider how few rivers were made navigable, and that there were no other means of communication with the world at large but through these miserable roads, we see how isolated every town must have been; and hence the necessity of the manufacture or production of nearly every article of domestic use for home service.

Taunton had long been a place of importance in the West of England; and before so many large and new manufacturing towns sprung up, was relatively of much greater importance than at present. Camden thus describes "Thonton," or Taunton, of the 16th century:—"It is a neat town, delicately seated, and, in short, one of the eyes of the county." Our readers will not therefore be "surprised to hear" that Taunton was the first town in the West that applied for an Act of Parliament for the better construction and regulation of roads.

This Act passed in 1752, and appointed the present Trust; but the powers were found too limited, and several other Acts were successively applied for and obtained, to extend the limits and give enlarged powers. The full particulars of the several Acts, with the peculiarities, may be seen in Savage's History of Taunton.

The Trustees were authorised to borrow money on the security of the tolls, to expend the same in effecting the necessary work, and to pay off the said money as their funds enabled them. We understand that at one time the Trustees' mortgage debts amounted to nearly £20,000; but we find by referring to their balance-sheet, lately published, that it is now reduced to about £6,000. The annual income of the Trustees is about £3,600.

The roads are kept in excellent repair, and are farmed at an annual rent of about £4,000. In some directions they extend some considerable distance from the town; but the limits are very various, in some cases the roads of the Bridgwater, Ilminster and Minehead Trusts running within three or four miles, while in others the Taunton Trust extends to nearly 20 miles from the town.

The repairs are effected mostly with flints, broken to pass



through a two-inch ring; but lately a large quantity of the Westleigh stone has been used.

The whole of the work is under the direction of a surveyor, who receives \$150 per year for his services. Separate contracts are entered into for the supply, breaking and laying the "metal."

The Trustees meet monthly at the Guildhall, Taunton. The financial department is superintended by the clerk, whose salary is \$50 per annum. Besides the management of the roads the Trust has the superintendence of the various toll-houses, direction-posts and milestones, &c. The funds are occasionally laid out in cutting new roads, or in easing dangerous corners or steep hills, &c., &c. The bridges and their approaches are under the management of the county surveyor, and are paid for out of the county rates.

The next class of roads we have to consider are the highways, or parish roads. These were formerly under the care of the parish waywardens; but since the introduction of the new Highway Act the superintendence of them is entrusted to a surveyor. The Highway Board meets at the Union Workhouse, Taunton, similar to the guardians, and its powers are confined to the district parishes constituting the Taunton Union. The annual outlay was from \$3,000 to \$4,000, the cost per mile about \$14; but this amount will probably be reduced as the roads are put into a better state of repair. The funds are raised by rates, in which all parishes pay their proportion. As the turnpikes generally lead from town to town, so the highways lead from village to village, and are therefore spread as a net over the whole face of this beautiful vale. It is certainly more economical, as well as more convenient and pleasant, to have good roads; but while on this subject we would call the attention of the Highway Board to the necessity of a proper distribution of direction-posts, as much time is lost and vexation occasioned by the want of them. We would also suggest that the plan be adopted, as is occasionally in use on the Continent, of laying a strip of paving in large blocks, under the wheels, where the roads are unavoidably steep, which will enable a horse to take up a load with half the labour.

The last class of roads with which we have to do are those under the management of the Taunton Board of Health. These are not extensive, and consist of all roads (not turnpike) within the new borough. The expense of their repair is defrayed out of the town rates, and the surveyor of the Board superintends the work.

We have already referred to the importance and comfort of good roads. Now that the railway system has so extended, their use in connecting large towns and cities is somewhat abated; but as travelling generally has so in-

creased, their importance and good condition cannot be overrated. In this, as in many other things, the comparison between the present and "the good old times" is greatly in favour of the new; and although we are accustomed to call up many jovial associations in connection with the pleasures of Jehu and his "four-in-hand," we cannot altogether forget the day-and-night outside journey with rain, wind and snow in the face, to say nothing of the dangers to which we alluded in the former part of this paper.

The following may be of use and interest to our readers:—

DISTANCES OF VILLAGES WITHIN SEVEN MILES OF  
TAUNTON.

Angerleigh ..	.. 5	Lyng ..	.. 7
Ash Priors ..	.. 6	North Curry ..	.. 7
Bickenhall ..	.. 6	Norton Fitzwarren ..	.. 3
Bishop's Lydeard ..	.. 5	Nynehead ..	.. 6
Bishop's Hull ..	.. 2	Oak ..	.. 6
Broomfield ..	.. 5	Orchard Portman ..	.. 2
Bladon ..	.. 5	Pitminster ..	.. 4
Bradford ..	.. 4	Ruishton ..	.. 2
Cheddon Fitzpaine ..	.. 3	Staple Fitzpaine ..	.. 5
Combe Florey ..	.. 7	Staplegrave ..	.. 2
Corfe ..	.. 4	Stoke St. Mary ..	.. 3
Cothelstone ..	.. 7	Thorn Falcott ..	.. 3
Creech St. Michael ..	.. 3	Thurlbeer ..	.. 4
Durston ..	.. 5	Thurloxton ..	.. 6
Hatch Beauchamp ..	.. 6	Trull ..	.. 2
Halse ..	.. 7	West Hatch ..	.. 5
Heathfield ..	.. 5	West Monkton ..	.. 3
Hillfarrance ..	.. 4	West Buckland ..	.. 6
Kingston ..	.. 3		

### Canals and Railways.

An account of the above, giving particulars to the year 1871, may be found in page 108 "History of West Somerset," published at the same time and place as this account.

### The Markets.

No town would be complete without proper accommodation for the transaction of the business of those numerous itinerant traders and dealers who supply us with the various "good things of this life" and "the manifold fruits of the earth" from the neighbouring villages and rural districts. Taunton has for many years been noted for the excellence of its markets. Formerly agricultural and garden produce was sold at a low rate; but since the spread of the railway system, and the ease and small cost of transfer, all marketable materials have considerably risen in value. We read that during the siege of this town

the price of butter rose from threepence to one shilling and sixpence per pound ; but it is now at a still higher price in these days of peace and plenty.

Formerly the markets were held in the Fore-street of that day around the Market Cross, opposite the White Hart Hotel. There were a few shambles at the East end, in a lane called "Shambles Alley," of which the portreeves, as officers of the Bishop of Winchester, had the management and profits. The portreeves now receive £18 per year from the trustees of the markets as an equivalent for this right, which they relinquished in their favour. The trustees also pay the sum of thirty-one shillings and threepence yearly to the Bishop of Winchester as a quit-rent.

The Market Cross that formerly adorned our town was an object of national, as well as local interest. Probably at this spot met the Royalists who opposed the progress of Perkin Warbeck in the 16th century. Around it were assembled those gallant and brave Tauntonians who so well and so successfully defended their town, and whose valour excited the admiration of all England. It was here that the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth was proclaimed King of Great Britain. Here it was also that in time of civil war the burgesses assembled in troop, and around it in time of peace were carried on the various transactions of trade and commerce. Here the mayor of Taunton in ages gone by read the proclamation of elections, and other important documents.

The Taunton Market Cross stood until the year 1780, when it was removed by the instrumentality of General Roberts, who was at that time one of the members for Taunton. Various portions of it were divided as relics among some of the principal inhabitants, and parts of it were formerly in the possession of Dr. Billet, in East-street. After forming the sides of the stonework of a furnace-fixing, the stones were removed to the foundation of a wall on the new road at Bishop's Hull, where they still are. Other portions were given to the Buncombe family, and were placed in the foundations of the wall on the Eastern side of the house now occupied by Henry Alford, Esq., of Mount. But upon inquiry we cannot hear that any of the carvings or sculptures were amongst them ; so that after occupying perhaps the most important station in this town, the remains of the old cross are now "out of sight as well as out of mind." Such is life. "To what vile uses may we come!"

In the British Museum may be seen a sketch of the original cross. It was built of Hambdon Hill stone, probably in the 15th or 16th century, and was hexagonal in plan, with seats or steps at its base, battlemented on its first story with pinnacles, and gargoyles at the angles. Above were six canopied recesses, each containing a carved

figure. The third story was a repetition of the second on a smaller scale, and above this was a sun-dial ; the whole surmounted by a weather-cock.

In the sketch referred to, a roofed arched arcade, supported on six pillars, is shown surrounding the cross ; but this probably was an addition of a later period.

The six sculptured figures appear to have been those of Apostles, probably the patron saints of the various ecclesiastical buildings of the town. Although we are not aware who erected the Market Cross, yet from the close connection of this town with the see of Winchester it is most likely it was built by one of the venerable bishops of that diocese. Probably the books at the Vatican of Rome may be able to give the name of the founder. It will be remembered that in the days of the past it was usual to erect crosses at public and frequented spots, especially in market-places, churchyards and cross roads. There were several of them in this town. The remains of St. James's churchyard cross may yet be seen at the Somersetshire Archaeological Museum, and it is certain that a cross stood on the London-road at Bathpool. They generally were fixed for the purpose of exciting devotion, and were often of very beautiful and costly workmanship ; but each kind of cross had its peculiar use. At the churchyard cross devotees counted their beads and repeated their Ave Marias. The highway cross was often a favourite spot for the meetings of friends, and at the Market Cross proclamations were read, and public notices proclaimed.

The present Market Cross was erected (A.D., 1857) at the North end of the Parade, by the members of the Kinglake family, as a memorial of their parents, the late Mr. Kinglake having been "Lord of the Borough." The cross has somewhat a resemblance to the original, without the pent-roof shed.

Considerable annoyance having been experienced from holding the markets in the street, in the year 1763 a company was formed, called "The Market House Society," for the purpose of obtaining an Act of Parliament to pull down the old houses that formerly stood on the present site of the Parade, and make other alterations and improvements in the town. The expense seemed to be so great that for some years little was done ; but upon its being suggested that the sums usually wasted in contested elections should be applied to this purpose, a start was given. Subscriptions to the value of £2,000 flowed in, and an Act of Parliament was obtained in the year 1768. By this Act a number of gentlemen were appointed trustees, who were to be a self-electing body, of whom two-thirds were to be townsmen and one-third inhabitants of the neighbourhood. They were empowered to borrow £4,000 to carry out the before-mentioned improvements ; to purchase

and pull down houses at the lower end of North-street (which stood across the road), and other houses near East-gate, to widen and improve the streets, to erect oil lamps, and do many other matters for the benefit of the town; and although they were called "Market House Trustees" they were in fact "General Improvement Commissioners," and any spare funds that they might have had, after payment of all just claims, was to be appropriated to the education of poor children. This happy climax has never been reached. Notice was to be given on Sundays after morning prayer at St. Mary's of the various meetings of the Trustees.

In 1772 the present Market House was erected, and was pronounced at the time "an elegant building." Savage in 1822 confirms this opinion!!! In the basement were extensive vaults, let to wine merchants; on the ground floor, a Guildhall, a Reading-room, and offices; on the first floor, an Assembly-room, 60 feet by 30 feet and 24 feet high, used for balls and public meetings, and connected with it were card and retiring rooms; above was a billiard-room, and apartments for the use of attendants. On the North side of this building is the Parade, 216 feet long, with a broad paved walk, 18 feet wide. There can be no doubt that this fine open space is the making of the town of Taunton, gives it air and health, and strikes a stranger with its commanding appearance.

In the ball-room is a fine oil painting of George III., presented by Sir Benjamin Hammet. Colonel Cox also presented two large glass chandeliers.

On each side of the Market House are spacious arcades, with open slated roofs on semi-circular arches and piers.

A bell is rung morning and evening, for opening and closing the business of the markets.

In the year 1817 it was deemed necessary to obtain a second Act to secure greater accommodation and convenience, owing to the increased trade.

This Act gave power to add to the number of the Trustees, to borrow £10,000 upon the property and tolls of the market, to light with gas the various streets of the town, to purchase a large quantity of property on the Western side of the Parade, to erect extensive meat markets and a noble room above, with an Ionic front (now used as a reading-room, and for the Museum of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society). Powers were also obtained by the Act to prevent the sale of provisions within 1,000 yards of the market, and to further enable the trustees to act in various ways as Improvement Commissioners.

For many years there was not a single butcher's shop in the town, but the Trustees now license a few on payment

of an annual rent. Large amounts of money have been spent by the Trustees in obtaining and opposing various Acts of Parliament, so that their debts are now upwards of £18,500!!! To pay the interest on this large sum the tolls and rents are necessarily high, and are likely to remain so for many years.

Their annual income in 1791 was £400, but it is now about £2,000, and the expenditure nearly that sum, of which the interest amounts to about one-half.

The principal market is on Saturdays, with a smaller on Wednesdays, and the "Great," or Cattle Market, on the second and last Saturday of each month.

The following are the chief articles sold, and the places of sale:—Horses, Castle Green; bullocks, sheep, &c., in the cattle market—a large open spot, with proper accommodation, near Castle Green; pigs, in an enclosed place behind the Eastern side of High-street; corn, in a fine market, opposite the Castle Hotel, Fore-street; beef, pork and other animal food, in the "Butchery," Fore-street, already described; fish, butter and poultry, under the Institution; corn, rope, &c., in the Eastern Arcade; skins, leather and goods, &c., the Western Arcade; and fruit, vegetables, &c., on covered stalls on the Parade. There are many other articles sold, such as books, ware, boots, sweets, brooms, &c., far too numerous to mention.

On looking through the balance-sheet for the year 1870 we observe the following particulars, which may be of interest to our readers:—The total annual amount received as tolls is £1,776; the annual rents produced—Corn Exchange and cellars, £28; shop and cellars, Market House, £68; Assembly and other rooms, £80; Institution, £40. The interest ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.) paid on £18,900 (the present debt) is £835 9s. 9d. Payments to the Local Board of Health—cleansing, £20; lighting, £85. Cost of lighting the markets, about £40. Water-works Company, £15. Salaries—to clerk, £42; inspector, £20; commission to collector, £90. The total amount of receipts over expenditure, £188. As a surplus accumulates a number of the bondholders are paid off and the debt thus gradually lowered.

In conclusion we regret that the funds of the markets seem to give little hope that there is a probability of the removal or re-erection of that "elegant building"—the Market House. Taunton surely deserves a far handsomer, and more suitable edifice.

THE COUNTY GAOL.—THE SHIRE HALL.—THE BARRACKS.—An account of these buildings will be found in the "History of West Somerset," page 109. Particulars of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society and Museum, at page 10.

## The Taunton and Somerset Hospital.

Among the numerous public edifices which adorn this town, none deserves our attention and consideration more than the above, especially at a time like the present, when, from its increasing extent and sphere of usefulness, additional funds are often required to clear off the accumulated deficiencies of past years, and to prevent any diminution in the benefits which it now affords to the poor of the county. Surely no institution, either at home or abroad, has a greater claim upon the inhabitants of West Somerset than this. We believe we are correct in saying that there is no other building of similar capacity and usefulness within an area of above five hundred square miles. This, added to the fact that its doors are open to the suffering poor at all times, day and night, throughout the year, and that the best advice and assistance are at all times freely given, ought to entitle it to such a flow of liberal donations and yearly subscriptions as to make it a credit to our wealthy county.

In the times that are past the ministers of religion considered it a part of their duty (as it was once their interest) to remind the dying of establishments that had a claim upon their purse. The Church of England still enjoins the clergy to "move such persons of their ability to be liberal to the poor," &c.; nor does she forget by the reading of the Offertory to constantly remind the congregation of that important duty. Having said this much, we will proceed to the history of the establishment.

In the year 1772, the desirableness of a general county hospital having been strongly felt, subscriptions were collected, and, a beautiful site on a slight hill on the South side of the town having been secured, a noble building was commenced, and in the year 1774 was covered in. But by this time the funds were spent, and in this state it remained for many years. It was eventually sold for the purpose of a Convent, and has been since occupied by a society of nuns of the Order of St. Francis.

As it was considered a disgrace that the town should remain without such a necessary establishment, in the year 1809, Dr. Malachi Blake, in the columns of the *Taunton Courier*, reminded the inhabitants of this town and neighbourhood that many cities and other places were celebrating the 50th anniversary of the reign of King George the Third, and suggested that this town should observe that event by the establishment of a general county hospital. A public meeting having been called, and a committee appointed, subscriptions were collected, and on the 11th April, 1810, the foundation-stone

was laid with masonic honours, on land presented by George Sheppard, Esq.

Much has been said and written of late years as to the position and situation of public institutions; and there can be no doubt that the original site was far better than the present, although in case of accident it is of importance that the sick should be enabled to be easily and quickly removed.

The hospital was built to accommodate twenty-six in-patients, and contained a surgery, committee-room and matron's residence. Considerable additions have been made, on several occasions. About thirty years ago new wings were added and extensive alterations were made, such enlargements being rendered necessary by the increased demand.

There is a capital garden attached, where the convalescent take exercise. In the committee-room is an excellent likeness of Dr. Blake, to whose exertions so much is due. The late Dr. H. Standert was a liberal contributor, and presented his valuable medical library. His bust adorns the institution.

Many noble benefactions have been given to the hospital by charitable individuals, whose names are permanently recorded in two tablets which are hung in the board-room.

Considerable sums have been carefully expended at various times to render the arrangements of this hospital more suitable for its benevolent purpose and more comfortable to its occupants. It now possesses many conveniences, and among them we notice ophthalmic wards, library, lavatories, museum, hot water and drying apparatus, Douche shower and other baths, convalescent wards, dispensary, &c., &c. Excellent rules are drawn up for the government of the various classes of patients, as well as for the use of the subscribers, the medical staff, and the paid officers. These rules have been made with great care, and upon the model of other and more celebrated institutions. Among the more important rules we would mention that subscribers of two guineas annually, or benefactors of twenty pounds, are entitled to recommend one in-patient, or eight out-patients, and so on in proportion to the amount of subscription. Clergymen preaching sermons in aid of the hospital funds are also entitled to recommend as subscribers; but it is necessary that subscriptions be paid before the privileges are granted. Persons having infectious diseases are ineligible for admission, and security for the cost of burial or removal is required. In case of accident no recommendation is necessary. The payment of the chaplain's stipend is supported by a separate fund. Books for the use of the patients are provided, and other means taken to render

the period of confinement in the building less tiresome than it would otherwise prove. The system of pupil nurses and the visitation of the patients by ladies has lately been introduced and found to work successfully. Enlarged sick and convalescent wards were erected and other improvements made in the year 1871, on the Eastern side, at a total cost of about £1,800. It is now proposed to make similar additions on the Western side. According to the report just issued the number of patients in the house at present appears to be about ninety, the total number during the year being nearly eight hundred. The total number of in-patients who have been admitted in the hospital since the foundation in 1812 amounts to 22,200. The number of out-patients admitted during the past year to October, 1871, is 2,733. The total number since the foundation in 1812 about 90,000. The grand total of in and out-patients being upwards of 112,000.

The county hospital annually provides assistance for about 800 patients, and makes up 90 beds. It is a most useful institution, and deserves the greatest encouragement. A large sum of money was ordered by the Lord Chancellor to be paid to this hospital by the Canal Company as a compensation for injury done to certain parishes by alterations of the Teme.

Great credit is due to the honourable staff of medical gentlemen who so nobly and gratuitously give their time and services.

In closing this paper we shall be pardoned for again reminding our readers that all this good cannot be effected without considerable outlay and cost, and that, consequently, extra subscriptions and donations are earnestly required. Further particulars of this useful institution may be obtained by reading the reports, which are issued annually.

### Taunton Union Workhouse.

The first thing that strikes us in considering this establishment is the peculiarity of its name—"Union," a place where a family is divided; "Workhouse," a house where very little work is done; but, we are aware, the term Union is given it from the "union of parishes," of which, in the Taunton district, there are 38; and the name workhouse is the old term for a house formerly set apart in each parish, where the aged and infirm were to be taken care of, and the destitute able-bodied adults and forsaken children were taught to work.

Previous to the Reformation the afflicted poor depended mostly upon the assistance they could get from the benevolent, the charity of the rich, or the "daily dole" from the various monasteries, abbeys, priories and almshouses.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth an Act of Parliament was passed for the appointment of overseers of the poor (who met each Sunday after morning service), and power was given for the rating of parishes, the erection of workhouses, binding apprentices, and giving outdoor relief, &c., &c. This system continued in practice many years; but, various abuses having crept in, about 30 years ago, a great reformation took place, and, the new Poor-law Act having been passed, guardians of the poor were appointed, and the union of parishes was completed, by which arrangement a revised and more complete system was introduced, at the same time more economy was exercised and greater attention paid to the unfortunate and afflicted.

In former papers we have alluded to the old poor-houses of this town.

That of St. Mary's, in Church-square, was built for the accommodation of 60 inmates; and that of St. James's, in East Reach, for the reception of 20 more, the workhouse for the parish of Wilton being at Sherford.

These buildings are now disposed of for other uses.

In the year 1837 the Taunton Union Workhouse was erected, at the South-east corner of the town, for the accommodation of four hundred persons. The site is high and healthy, the situation good. The principal front faces the South, overlooking the fields, and consequently is not much seen. It is built of brick, with Bath-stone dressings, on the "radiating plan," and divided into various wards, so constructed that the officers from a central situation can command a view of the several yards and premises, which are kept scrupulously clean and nice, the lime-wash brush doing constant service. There is a large Board-room, in which are held the meetings of the guardians and the Highway Board.

There is a quantity of land attached, which is cultivated by the inmates; and all the washing, mending, and repairing of the clothing, &c., is done on the premises, washing and drying machinery, hot-air apparatus, &c., being provided.

We cannot forget that it was at the Taunton Union in the autumn of the year 1849 that that fatal visitor, the Cholera, appeared with such singular rapidity and such frightful effect, upwards of sixty persons dying within a few days. Want of sufficient ventilation in the children's ward appeared to have encouraged it. The Board of Health, which had just been formed, was called together hastily on a Sunday afternoon, and the most strenuous exertions used to prevent the contagion spreading over the town. Quicklime was strewn throughout the courts and alleys; cleanliness, ventilation, and attention to drainage, were most particularly insisted on; and, although all the dead were interred in St. Mary's church-

yard, in the very heart of the town, not a single case occurred beyond the workhouse.

A convalescent hospital was improvised a few miles in the country, and thither a large number of the afflicted paupers were sent, most of whom recovered, although at the expense of the life of a philanthropic person (Mr. Brannan) who took care of them.

In consequence of the above awful visitation a new fever hospital was erected to the East of the Union workhouse, and there all infectious cases were sent. According to the rules a chaplain of the Church of England is appointed to the spiritual wants of the paupers; but none are obliged to attend the religious services against their principles. Authorised ministers, clergymen and magistrates can at any time visit the house and see the inmates, and the friends of the poor at appointed times. As the workhouse is adjoining the Church of the Holy Trinity, and the incumbent was the chaplain, an arrangement was then made for the paupers to attend Divine service in that place of worship; but, we believe, this practice is now abolished.

The amount of poor-rates received by the officers of the Taunton Union is about £16,000 per annum. Of this a large portion goes to the county fund, to pay the police, bridges, gaols, &c., and other county expenditure. The cost of each inmate in the house is about 2s. 6d. per week. The various officers, with their respective salaries, are as below:—Clerk, £105; chaplain, £60; master, £50; matron, £30; schoolmaster, £60; schoolmistress, £36; nurse, £20; porter, £20; the house medical officer, £50. There are seven district medical officers, at a total cost of nearly £600 yearly. Four relieving-officers are paid £350 per annum. The cost of out-door relief appears to vary from £2,500 to £3,000 throughout the district. The expense of lunatics is about £1,000 a-year.

By a return of pauper statistics, lately issued, we find there are in Great Britain upwards of 650 union workhouses, and that there are more than one million persons depending upon their countrymen for assistance, while of these nearly forty thousand are insane.

In reviewing the above particulars it will be seen that the care and management of our poor is one of the most important questions of the day, and a matter of grave responsibility to all, great care being necessary, on the one hand, to prevent imposition and idleness, and, on the other, that no case of real distress should go unrelieved, and that while the ratepayers are not unnecessarily burdened and due economy is exercised, we may never be charged with the neglect of those duties which the Christian religion and philanthropy demand of us.

## The Taunton Post-Office.

The contrast between the Post-office department of the present day and that of the past is very remarkable. Probably no institution or establishment has undergone greater change and improvement than that now under consideration. Starting from a private mounted courier, and passing onward through the "old stage," and then the mail coach, we come to the present travelling post-office on the line of railways, with its numerous attendants and load of many tons.

The Post-office arrangements of this country are now unrivalled, and the system must be considered as one of the very first and most effective aids of civilization.

The earliest posts on record were established by Darius, Emperor of Persia. The Romans also had a system for the speedy conveyance of news, and gave us the term "Post" from horses placed or posted at certain points waiting the conveyance of news. In this country the introduction of anything approaching a postal system was commenced in the reign of Edward III. In 1632 Charles I. abolished all private posts, and made it illegal to transmit letters except through the Government agency; but the full development of the Post-office was left to the middle of the 19th century before it was accomplished. The advantage of a general uniform charge was first shown in 1837 by Mr. Rowland Hill, and the great assistant to the Post-office was, doubtless, the extensive railway communication in this country.

The Post-office in this town was formerly in Church-square. In 1822 it was in North-street (opposite the Castle Hotel), and was afterwards removed to the North side of Hammet-street. About ten years ago it was again removed to Church-square. In the year 1862 the Post-office authorities purchased the present premises, and made extensive alterations and improvements—built a new sorting-room, fitted up a money-order office, and, in fact, re-arranged the whole establishment.

We have heard complaints made that the situation is not sufficiently public; but it is exceedingly central, with no less than four entrances, leading to all parts of the town; and probably few places are better accommodated in all respects than Taunton, for letters can be posted for London as late as 11 p.m., and for this locality and the West of England until half-past one in the morning.

The delivery of letters begins at 7 a.m. There is another delivery at 9.30, a third at 2.35 p.m., and a fourth at 5 in the evening, or letters may be called for at the Post-office the same time that the postmen commence their rounds. On Sundays there is but one delivery, commencing at 7 a.m. Letters, &c., are delivered by the



country postmen in the neighbouring villages. They leave Taunton at seven in the morning. The mail-carts leave as early as 3.30 a.m. for the more distant villages and towns, and return at nine in the evening. The Taunton postal district extends for about twenty miles distance towards West Somerset, and the whole of these offices are under the inspection of the Postmaster of Taunton. There are also travelling inspectors and surveyors, who make unexpected visits at uncertain times throughout the country.

The business of the Post-office has not only increased most materially from the very large number of letters now transmitted through its agency; but its conveniences are extensively made use of for the conveyance of small parcels, books, samples and patterns, which often swell out the postman's bag to alarming proportions. When it is remembered that most post-offices have now a money-order office attached, and that lately the business of the Post-office Savings' Banks and the Electric Telegraph Department have also been added, it will be seen that the duties to be executed are not small or unimportant.

Probably since the introduction of the art of printing there has been no agency that has produced better fruit towards the progress of civilization, and the arts and sciences &c., than the full development of the general postage system.

### The Taunton Board of Health.

In the year 1848 the inhabitants of Taunton considered that the growing interests of their town required a more complete and powerful system of local government than at that time existed. Public meetings were called and much discussion ensued as to what form should be chosen. Many of the principal residents proposed a Mayor and Corporation. This was opposed by others on account of the great expense, and they recommended "Improvement Commissioners," with powers to be conferred on them by a special Act of Parliament; whilst a third party was in favour of trying the new general Act of Parliament, which had just been passed, and which was entitled "The Public Health Act of 1848."

After considerable debate on the merits and objections of the various plans, public opinion seemed in favour of the latter, and Taunton was consequently one of the first towns in England which adopted it.

The Act, as its name denoted, was constituted to promote and protect the health of the people, and embraced a great variety of subjects for the comfort, well-being, and general government of populous places. It empowered the election of members, who were to be chosen

by the ratepayers, the number being regulated according to the size and population of the place.

The Board in this town consists of twenty-one members, of which seven are annually elected; but the Board have the power of filling up any vacancy which may occur previous to an election.

The new Board appoints a chairman for the ensuing year, who presides at all general meetings, is a member of all committees, and gives a casting vote in case of equality of voting.

The Board next selects the various committees—of finance, paving, lighting, drainage, plans, &c.

The various chairmen of committees form the "Emergency Committee," which only acts in case of any special and unexpected occasion.

The appointments of the surveyor, clerk, inspector, and collector are permanent, until they are superseded or retire from their office.

For some years after the passing of the Public Health Act there existed in London a directory called the General Board of Health, whose duty it was to assist in the formation and commencement of new Boards, and to settle any uncertain or difficult points that arose and were referred to them. Since the year 1848 various other bills relating to the health, government and improvement of towns have been passed, and adopted by the Taunton Board of Health. Among other Acts by which they are empowered are the "Police Clauses," Local Government, and Nuisance Removal Acts.

The powers given, therefore, to the Board and its officers are very extensive, and, in cases of resistance, summary and stringent.

Among the principal duties are the providing and maintaining effective drainage, the supervision of all cesspits, ejects, watercourses, gutters, &c.; inspection and approval of all plans for new erections, repair of the various roads and streets within the borough, providing and maintaining the public lamps and lights, cleansing and watering the highways, inspection of slaughter-houses, lodging-houses, &c.; removal of all nuisances, construction of new streets, and alteration or improvement of existing ones; superintendence of the fire brigade, care and maintenance of the paths and paving throughout the town and borough, numbering and naming streets, &c. There are many other minor duties, so that it will be seen that the Board undertakes the general management and government of the town.

In addition to the foregoing, the clerk prepares and draws the general and special rates, conducts the correspondence, and enters the business of the Board, &c.

The offices are in East-street, and contain clerk's and

surveyor's rooms, besides a spacious Board-room. There are commodious buildings and enclosed yard in the new street recently formed near St. Mary's Church, and named Magdeline-street, which is very central and well situated for the purposes of storage of materials and the care of the apparatus of the fire brigade, &c.

An extensive system of drainage has been executed by the Board since its formation in 1849, and the sewers and their branches extend to nearly every portion of the new borough.

We have heard many complaints in past years respecting the work and expenditure of the Board, but believe that few towns in England have been more efficiently or economically drained than Taunton. It is true that a few small districts have had to be sewered more than once; but in a borough so flat as Taunton, the work of which has been executed piecemeal, it is impossible to avoid some alterations. Besides, there are occasionally local difficulties that cannot be foreseen and provided for.

We have seen sewer-pipes opened in which roots no larger than a pencil had found their way, which had so increased and multiplied that the whole pipe was completely filled with their small white fibres. In other places quick-sands had been washed into the pipes; whilst in numerous cases the carelessness of the people had allowed them to be filled with improper materials, such as it would be difficult to describe.

When are considered the intricate windings of the various sewers, that they are constructed generally in the dark, undermining houses, often running through and under the beds of streams, sometimes at almost a dead level, it will be seen that the Board is much at the mercy of the contractors and workmen employed. A large portion of these sewers was constructed before Taunton was supplied with water so abundantly as it is now. But, with all these sets-off, wherever the drains have been opened they have generally been found in good working order.

There is one point doubtless that the Board ought now to take into its consideration, and that is the utilisation of the sewage, and its prevention from contaminating our rivers, although we are aware that this is yet a very vexed question and a problem that has not been solved satisfactorily.

The Taunton Board of Health, being empowered to borrow money on the mortgage of the borough rates, is enabled to execute extensive improvements and alterations, and has lately shown much public spirit in the formation and laying out new streets and paths.

According to the report for 1871 the repair of about 4½ miles of roads in the borough cost £238. New and old

paving, £425; cleansing, £369; water, £11; lighting 292 lamps, £932. Salaries: to clerk, £100; surveyor, £120; inspector and collector, £85; street keeper, £10; auditor, £5 6s.; rent, rates, &c., £62; interest and repayments, £403. There are also other payments—to the fire brigade, bathing-places and sundries; the total expenditure being £3,223. This amount is raised in the following manner:—Rates, at 1s. 8d. in the pound, about £3,000; Market Trustees, on account of lighting, £85; cleansing, £20; Turnpike Trustees, cleansing, £82.

The assessable value of the district is £46,232.

Although we have shown that large sums are yearly expended upon this town, and the rates occasionally fall heavily upon the ratepayers, yet it is for the good and prosperity of our ancient and loyal borough, and it is not a small matter to boast of that Taunton stands the second town in the kingdom for health, and for general cleanliness and airiness is unrivalled, causing it to be admired by all visitors and prized by all its inhabitants.

The balance-sheet in 1864 showed an expenditure of £5,360, against £3,223 in 1871.

### The Taunton Gas-Works.

"Light, light; give me more light!"—*Goethe's last words.*

Such was the dying request of the above-named great poet; and such seems to be the desire of the majority of the present generation. This appears manifested in the extension of old gas-works and the erection of new. Sixty years have hardly passed since this useful invention was first introduced; and now every city, town and place of any importance has its gas manufactory. A small apparatus has also been invented and fitted up for the use of private houses, ships, &c. We know one in a village a few miles from this town that only supplies a large school, the church, and half a dozen houses.

As the simple and early habits of our forefathers are neglected, and we gradually indulge in late hours, so, in like proportion, do we demand artificial light. The present time has been called an age of gas-lights. The simple wick burning in a stone reservoir (like a penny ink-bottle) was the lamp generally used by the Romans and other great nations, and it appears to have been left for the nineteenth century to produce a brilliant light either in gas or oil.

The late extraordinary discovery in America and elsewhere, of extensive natural oil-springs seems most opportune. It is stated that no business was ever so quickly established, or so extensively followed in a short time, as that of the petroleum oil trade.

A few of the streets of Taunton were formerly lighted with oil, and it was only a few years ago that the

original lamps were disposed of by the Trustees of the Markets. About A.D. 1832 it was arranged that a Gas Company should be established in this town, and works were erected on a badly-selected site at the higher end of Holway-lane. These supplied the town for many years, and we can well remember the novelty gas was considered in those days—how the people would stare at the long row of brilliant lights, especially in East Reach. The price of gas was 12s. 6d. per thousand feet, and the Trustees of the Markets paid about £400 per annum for lighting the principal streets.

As the demand for gas increased and the use of it became more general, it was considered that the public had a right to expect that they should be supplied at a far cheaper rate; and meetings were called, and a deputation requested to wait upon the Gas Company to express this desire. A new Company was subsequently formed, which applied to Parliament for an Act to enable it to establish works and supply Tauntonians with better and cheaper gas. The bill was opposed by the old Company, and also by the Trustees of the Markets; it was, however, passed, and the present "Taunton Gas-light and Coke Company" established, which soon commenced the erection of extensive works on a well-selected spot at Tangier, adjoining the Tone.

Larger and a more extended system of mains were laid throughout the town; the price of gas was very materially lowered, and, consequently, it was far more extensively used than before, not only for producing light, but also for heating, drying, and cooking purposes. The price in 1850, was 7s. per thousand; in 1852, 6s. 6d.; and in 1863, 4s. 6d.

The site of the works is the junction of the Blackdown stream with the river Tone; and in making the necessary excavations for the gas-holders large trees were found beneath the surface, which had been torn from their roots, washed down the stream, and embedded in the mud, probably thousands of years ago.

The manufactory and buildings are kept in excellent order, under the care of the skilful manager, to whom the public are much indebted for the good quality and the low price of the gas supplied to this town, the price being now but 4s. 6d. per 1,000 cubic feet.\*

When the Taunton Board of Health was established, the Trustees of the markets left them to provide and pay for the lighting of the streets. The new Board extended the lamps to the limits of the borough, lighting the various

entrances to the town. The total cost of the public lighting is now about £900 per annum, or £3 each lamp.

The affairs of the Taunton Gas Company are flourishing, and the interest paid on the shares must be satisfactory to the shareholders; yet the public have no cause of complaint, but far otherwise, as few towns of the size have better or cheaper gas than Taunton.

The old Company manufactured but five millions of cubic feet; the quantity made last year was thirty-three millions, being about three millions more than in the previous year. The interest now paid is 7 per cent. In 1870 a provisional order was obtained from the Board of Trade to raise additional capital, not exceeding £10,000. £7,000 were risen in 1845 on 1,400 red shares, £7,000 in 1846 on blue shares, and £14,000 in 1855 on 2,800 white shares. The mortgage debt is £7,266. The total amount of receipts for the year ending 30th June, 1871, was £9,603.

### The Taunton Water-Works.

"The waters stand in the hills."—*Psalms* 104.

In previous papers we have alluded to the necessity and value of a good water supply, and mentioned that its great importance was well known to past generations.

Among the many great and noble works executed by the Romans in times of peace, few attract more attention than the aqueducts which extended scores of miles from Rome, and supplied it with pure water, which was so highly valued by that great people, although, had they known the peculiar property of water to find its own level, they might have saved themselves much labour and expense, and not have piled arch upon arch without reason.

Our forefathers, also, anxious to give to their towns and cities a liberal supply of "potwater," were accustomed to expend considerable sums for this purpose. Pipes made of wood, lead, and even leather, were used before the general and extensive use of cast iron.

Streams and brooks were often diverted and turned into a town, and public wells sunk, and pumps affixed at various parts, which were kept in repair at the cost of the town, and were known by the names of "the Tithing Pumps." We well remember some of them even in our own day, which are now numbered with many of the old things of the past, and are remembered together with flints and steels, parish beadles, and old-fashioned church-yard stocks.

Although Taunton was far better off than most towns, it was felt by many of the more enterprising of its inhabitants that it required a larger, better and more copious supply of water than was furnished by wells, cisterns, and streams. Accordingly public meetings were called, and much discussion arose on the subject as to the best method

\* When the new large gas-holder was built three years ago great pieces of pure alabaster were dug up, to the surprise of many; but it is a fact that masses of alabaster are found every twenty or thirty feet in depth until 400 feet from the surface is reached.

of obtaining it. Many suggestions were made—amongst others, Artesian wells; a supply from the river Tone, by machinery and pumps; the use of the Kingston and other streams, or the canal water. A deep reservoir was proposed to be sunk in the gravelly soil to draw off all the water which would find its way from the surrounding districts, pumps being, of course, necessary. There were serious objections to all of these schemes, principally on account of the great value of water to the farmers and millers, and the fear of law-suits and claims for compensation. It was stated, apparently upon good authority and precedent, that the cost would be enormous, various sums, from twenty even up to fifty thousand pounds being named as the probable expense. The public consequently were backward in offering their assistance and patronage, and it was not until a few spirited inhabitants formed themselves into a company, in the year 1858, that anything was really done. These gentlemen determined to consult the highest authorities and get the best advice, and it was left for a stranger to tell the Tauntonians where to find a water supply.

The company employed the well-known and experienced firm of Easton and Amos, of Southwark, London, who reported that an abundance of the best water was to be had within five miles of Taunton, without cost and without machinery. Trial borings were made on Leigh and Blagdon hills, which proved satisfactory, and, the necessary shares having been subscribed, the work was fairly started. The water, upon analysis, was found to be of unusually good and suitable quality, and great care was taken by the company not to incur any improper or unnecessary expense.

The Act of Parliament received the Royal assent on the 28th of June, 1858, and the costs, including all the preliminary expenses, amounted to £813 12s. 6d.

The estimate for the proposed works was £10,700, exclusive of the reservoir for the same. It was considered that £13,000 would cover all the costs, including an adit or tunnel; and although it has been found necessary to extend the works in consequence of the increased demand, the cost has not very greatly exceeded the original estimate.

The water is obtained from the green sand formation on the Blackdown hills at the South-west of Taunton. The pipes fork off in various directions, and several tunnels, adits, wells and shaft-holes were constructed.

The water thus collected is brought through eight-inch cast-iron pipes into the reservoir in a field between Fulwood and Blagdon, which is arched over and holds about 400,000 gallons. A larger reservoir was added in 1869.

The water is next conveyed through similar cast-iron

pipes into the town, but many houses are supplied on its transit. The pipes and mains are laid throughout the borough to the extreme limits, and the price allows its use even amongst the lowest-class cottages, the rent being but one penny per week for this class of property.

The company gave "constant pressure" for a considerable time; but in consequence of the great waste allowed by some unprincipled parties, "the intermittent system" has been adopted.

As the reservoir stands a very considerable height above the town, the pressure is great, and in case of fire proves most serviceable.

The use of the Company's water is not compulsory.

The amount raised on 1,200 shares was twelve thousand pounds, and three thousand were borrowed on mortgage.

### The Colleges and Schools of Taunton.

#### TAUNTON COLLEGE SCHOOL.

We have already noticed the old school-house in Castle Green; we now pass on to the new and handsome buildings at Mountlands, on the Chard road. These were erected on the proprietary system in the year 1868, or rather that part now in use, for only a portion of the original design has yet been built. The foundation-stone was laid by Lady Taunton, whose late noble husband proved himself a firm friend to the establishment. The day was observed as a general holiday; a grand procession walked, and the Freemasons appeared in full costume. The architects were Messrs. Giles and Co., of London, late of Taunton; the builder, Mr. Spiller, of Taunton. Although success will, we trust, eventually crown the scheme, its progress has so far been slow; but the last report that has been issued seems encouraging. The head-master, the Rev. W. Tuckwell, is energetic and talented, and has established for himself a name and place. Full particulars as to terms, &c., may be known on application.

#### THE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE, FAIRWATER.

This proprietary school was originated in the year 1849, and for 21 years occupied Wellington-terrace, at Stepewater. The number of pupils ranges between 100 and 200. This College is connected with the London University. An annual examination takes place; the pupils appear successful. The new and tasty buildings face the railway and town, and have a commanding outline and effect. The architect was James, of London; the builder, Davis, of Taunton.

#### THE WESLEYAN COLLEGE.

The Wesleyan Collegiate Institution is situated on the Trull road, about a mile distant from the town, and presents a handsome appearance. It was erected in the

year 1852, and is also a proprietary establishment. The present building is in the Tudor Gothic style, with a lofty central tower and gabled wings on either side. The architect was Wilson, of Bath; the builder, Mason, of Exeter. Here also, as at the Independent College, from 100 to 200 youths receive a sound and practical education, with languages, accomplishments, gymnastics, &c., &c. The establishment appears in a very flourishing state, and pupils are received from all parts of England.

#### THE TAUNTON SCHOOL OF ART.

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

The revival of a love of the fine arts and of works of Nature demanded a school which should afford instruction to the rising generation and should direct the public taste. To effect so desirable an object the Government of this country has lent its assistance, and by grants, scholarships, prizes, casts, models, advice, information, inspection, and especially by the instruction of competent teachers, has now the satisfaction of numbering a goodly proportion of young people of each sex. Nor are these advantages confined to those of tender age; they are offered alike to all persons and classes. But Government does not make an unconditional offer: it requires each town to perform its share, viz., to provide a suitable building, to secure three public schools, and to guarantee a sum of not less than £50 a year to the master for his services in the central school.

The charges for the instruction given are very low, on scales to suit all classes; and as very select and excellent model drawings and patterns are chosen, and the best mode of instruction is adopted, the advantages are very great.

The facts becoming known in this town, W. A. Jones, Esq., M.A., and a number of gentlemen met and decided that Taunton should reap some of the before-mentioned advantages. Accordingly, on the 31st of January, 1866, a town meeting was called at the Guildhall, under the presidency of the Bailiffs of the Borough, and was well attended by most of the leading men of the town. A committee was appointed, subscriptions were collected, and the whole scheme was properly started.

The building selected was very central and suitable, and was originally erected about the year 1840, by Mr. Bainbridge, M.P., for a Taunton Mechanics' Institute, in Hunt's Court (or Bath Place, as it is now called). Soon after its completion it was well stocked with books, papers, maps, apparatus, and various machinery for the improvement and use of the mechanics of this town; but although a capital lecture-hall was provided and interesting lectures were occasionally delivered, the establishment did not flourish, but gradually fell away, notwithstanding several

attempts made to revive the funds and arouse the public interest in its favour. Mr. Rowe is the present talented master of the School of Art.

We are afraid that Tauntonians must plead guilty (especially the working classes) to a neglect of those means which have been taken or introduced for their advantage or improvement; for we regret to add that the School has passed a very struggling existence, bazaars and concerts having been pressed into the service.

A "wild flower" garden was secured and arranged at Sherford, where the pupils were taught to sketch from "Nature's own jewels."

When it is considered what an advantage a knowledge of sketching and drawing is to the mechanic, and to all engaged in any constructive business, and what a pleasure and recreation it is (or may be) to all persons, it is to be deplored that the study is not more generally followed up.

According to the report lately issued we observe that there are at present 120 pupils. Many have distinguished themselves by diligence and proficiency, 27 having obtained certificates. In addition to the art classes, science classes have lately been established, under the care of Mr. Hoffert. Prizes are offered annually.

Although the school may probably have suffered in the past from want of funds, we trust a brighter future is before it, and that prosperity and success may yet smile on the Taunton School of Art.

#### THE TAUNTON CONVENT.

The Convent stands upon a pleasant, healthy eminence on the South side of the town. It is occupied by a society of nuns of the order of St. Francis, who came from Brussels during the French revolution. They arrived in England in 1794, and originally settled at Winchester, but in 1807 removed to Taunton, and purchased an unfinished building intended for a County Hospital. The foundation-stone had been laid in 1772 with great ceremony by Lord North; but funds did not flow in sufficiently fast to allow the promoters to complete it, and it was therefore sold to pay expenses.

Since the time it was first occupied constant additions and alterations have been made. It now consists of a large collection of buildings of various styles and dates, but altogether has rather a picturesque appearance. The main building is surmounted by a lofty clock tower, somewhat in Italian order. The chapel is beautifully fitted up in the Gothic style, with great taste. The cloisters consist of a series of Gothic arches, of chaste design. A considerable quantity of land is walled in to afford recreation-grounds, gardens, &c. We are not initiated into the mysteries of this establishment, but understand that education forms the principal employment of its inmates, in addition to

their religious exercises. The nuns, as is well known, wear a peculiar dress, according to their position and standing, the novices being distinguished from those more advanced. The lay sisters may have been often seen in our streets walking in pairs according to the orders of their sect. A few years ago many of the sisterhood left the establishment to found a new convent or colony elsewhere. The number of inmates is not generally known, but, judging from the extent of the premises, it cannot be small; and their funds are said to be considerable.

#### THE CONVENT OF PERPETUAL ADORATION.

In the year 1868 Paul's House, near the Crescent, was taken and fitted up for the reception of a small number of nuns of the above order. The site of the house is said to be that of the old Monastery of St. Paul. Since their establishment considerable additions and alterations have been effected, and while we are writing a new chapel is being erected. One of the peculiarities observed by the nuns, we understand to be, that one or more of their number shall at all times be in service at the altar. Hence the term "Perpetual Adoration."

### The Banks.

Although comparatively modern institutions, banks have now become as important a branch of our national economy as any we can name; and doubtless much of the wealth and prosperity of this great nation is due to their influence, success and probity. To Italy we owe the introduction of banks into this country, about the end of the seventeenth century, although a kind of banking was in practice at the time of the Crusades.

The Bank of England was first established in 1693. Banks were so named from the Italian word *Banca*, a bench, on which occurred the transactions in the market-places. They were originally principally in the hands of the Jews and goldsmiths, and were generally of three classes—deposit, discount and circulation; but in most banks of the present day all are combined.

In England they were often originated by some wealthy tradesman, who added a little banking business to his own trade, in most cases in a room appointed for that purpose behind his shop or place of business. This was so in one instance in this town. At the present time, banks are generally originated by joint-stock companies, "limited."

#### THE OLD BANK.

The first bank in this town of which we have any account was conducted by Messrs. Brigdale, Halliday and Sheppard. It was carried on on the site of the present corn market, and was known by the above title. Its business was not large; at that time one-pound notes were

in circulation. After it was in existence a few years Halliday retired, and shortly afterwards Sheppard did the same; when Brigdale took his son into partnership, and one fine morning in 1816 the public found the doors closed and their deposits missing. The strong room or bullion cellar is yet in existence, under the entrance to the old College School.

#### YOUNG'S BANK

was established by two brothers of the above name, in North-street, and continued, with varying success, but a few years. In 1818 they also came to grief. An investigation took place, and the depositors received but a small dividend.

#### HAMMET'S BANK.

In the year 1790 a new bank was established by Sir Benjamin Hammet, in conjunction with Messrs. Jeffries, Woodford and Buncombe. They transacted a considerable amount of business. Various changes took place in the firm by death and removal, &c.; but in 1822 the business was carried on under the title of Woodford, Kinglake, Woodford and Poole. (Bale afterwards became a partner, but came to an untimely end in 1837.) They drew on Eddalle and Co., of Lombard-street, London. The place of business was in Fore street, on the West side of the present institution, the premises now occupied by the Somersetshire Bank.

#### THE TAUNTON BANK.

In the year 1800 Messrs. John and Isaac Badcock established the above bank, at their place of business, on the South side of Fore-street. The Christian names of these partners have been changed on many occasions; but the surname remains unaltered. They draw upon Ransome and Co., of London. Their notes have a view of St. Mary's tower on the front, and the Taunton arms on the back.

#### THE SOMERSETSHIRE BANK,

originated at Langport by Messrs. Stuckey, two merchants, who afterwards established branches in the various adjoining towns, and opened the bank on the South side of Fore-street, on the premises now occupied by the Wilts and Dorset Company. When the firm of Woodford, Kinglake and Co. gave up their business in 1838, the Somersetshire Bank (generally known here as Stuckey's) succeeded them, and removed to their place of business adjoining the institution and markets. It is a joint-stock bank of great respectability, and numbers many wealthy names among its shareholders. They draw on Messrs. Roberts and Co., London. The managing director was formerly Mr. William Woodland, but is now Mr. John Norman, of Staplegrave. About ten years ago they rebuilt their present bank, which now forms a



striking object from the Parade. The hours of business are from ten to three; Saturdays, ten to four.

#### THE WEST OF ENGLAND AND SOUTH WALES DISTRICT BANK

is also conducted by a joint stock company, and was established here about 20 years ago. Their offices were in Hammet-street, but new and extensive premises have been erected on the North side of Fore-street. Their buildings are of commanding appearance, in a style far beyond the ordinary type of Taunton houses. The manager for many years was Mr. Rawle, of Taunton, but is now Mr. W. King. London bankers, Glyn, Mills and Co., Lombard-street.

#### THE WILTS AND DORSET BANK.

In the year 1865 the Wilts and Dorset Banking Company opened a branch in this town. Their temporary offices were in Hammet-street. They have since purchased the premises, No. 4, Fore-street, where they have erected a handsome bank. Although the elevation wants width to set it off to advantage, the beautiful and tasteful style renders it an ornament to our town. The business is conducted by Mr. Lucy, on the joint-stock principle.

#### THE TAUNTON AND WEST SOMERSET SAVINGS BANK.

We now proceed with banks of another class. On the 6th September, 1817, by the exertions of Sir Thomas Lethbridge, Dr. Blake and other gentlemen, the above bank was commenced for the purpose of encouraging a spirit of prudence and economy among the working classes. The office was once in North-street; but the directors eventually purchased some old public-house premises in High-street and erected their present bank. Besides being a savings bank it is an annuity office. Mr. H. J. Leigh was the first actuary, then Mr. Harwood; but the duties have been ably conducted for many years by Mr. W. H. Chorley. The accounts, annually published in the papers, show the amount of good effected since its establishment. The bank formerly had branches in the various surrounding towns; but since the establishment of the Post-office Savings Bank these have been discontinued.

#### THE TAUNTON PENNY BANK.

The lowest sum received at savings banks is one shilling; and as it was believed that often the very poor would be glad to deposit much lower sums, a few years ago a penny bank was established in this town. Its offices were behind Cheap-side, East-street, and for a time some little business was transacted; but the establishment of the

#### POST-OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS

throughout the country has greatly interfered with its permanent success, although we understand that it has not much checked the progress of the savings bank.

In conclusion we may fairly presume that the establishment and continuation of the several banking institutions in this town is a proof of the progress and stability of this ancient and loyal borough; and we believe it a subject of congratulation that so many years have passed since the trade and prosperity of this town were affected by any misadventure in its banking interests.

### About some of the Inns of Taunton, and their Signs and Names.

There are many very curious matters connected with the above subject. We believe it is pretty well known that before the general use of reading and writing among the lower classes, signs, models and symbols were far more in use than at present. Nor were they confined to inns, for nearly every tradesman adopted some emblem whereby his house should be distinguished, and which enabled poor "Hodge" to find the "Golden Harp" or the "Black Lion," when he was unable to read the name of the occupier of the house.

The derivation of many of the old signs are now lost. A large number are very ancient; in some cases the signs remain after the cause or connection has passed away; a great number is derived from local subjects, many from popular, some from their connection with trades, and a few seem without any signification at all.

Some of those in the old part of London are most curious, and would puzzle an archaeologist to decipher, especially when they are corruptions. What are we to think of the "Bull and Mouth," unless history informs us that it was formerly the rendezvous of sailors and others from France, and that the inn was formerly known as the "Boulogne Mouth," from whence many of the sailors came.

But to return to our own town. First, then, we notice "Angel." "The Old Angel," "The Little Angel," seem favourite terms, and would appear to denote that the entertainment provided was of the very best and highest class. Possibly they may have some derivation from the Apostolic injunction—"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for some have entertained angels unawares."

"Bell," "Ring of Bells," generally in connection with, or near a church, and often the head-quarters of the ringers. In this town it may have had some connection with the Curfew, the ringing of which is still continued.

"Black Boy" is supposed to have originally denoted a smoking-house, tobaccoists often using the same emblem. Some think it refers to the Duke of Moamouth, who was so called.

"Castle Inn" is usually to be found near the vicinity of a castle, and was for the accommodation of many of those whose business called them to the castles and courts of justice and law in olden days.

"Coach and Horses" and "Waggon and Horses" are the titles often given by men who have either been coachmen or waggons, and who, giving up that occupation, become publicans, and call their houses after their late trades.

"Crown," "Crown and Tower," "Crown and Mitre" and the "Crown and Sceptre" are favourite titles, and were formerly the head-quarters of very loyal men. The "Crown and Mitre" denoted Church and State. The "Crown and Sceptre" in this town, was probably so named by an adherent of Royalty, in contradistinction to "King" James, Duke of Monmouth, who had an empty crown, without any sceptre. History tells us that a man who kept the "Crown Inn" was imprisoned for saying that "his son was born heir to the Crown."

"Four Alls" is a curious sign, and denotes an unsound idea once in vogue among the agriculturists: it is translated thus, "The King governs all, the parson prays for all, the soldier fights for all, and the farmer works for all." Occasionally it is the "Five Alls," in which case the lawyer is said to plead for all.

"Fleur de Lis" (in this town) should be the "Portman Arms," as the lily formed part of their bearings.

"George" was formerly the most popular of all signs, and was lately so in honour of the late reigning Sovereigns, but was originally dedicated to the memory of St. George, who was born at Capadocia, and beheaded for the Christian faith A.D. 290.

"Green Dragon" was probably a very ancient sign, and dated back to the time of King Arthur, who adopted it as his crest. It was afterwards revived by being made a badge of the house of Tudor.

"King and Queen" denote William and Mary, and the inn is supposed to be so named by having been formerly frequented by their supporters and the friends of the Revolution, and afterwards by the Whigs.

"Lamb and Flag," probably given from some early connection with the Church, where the emblem is often to be met with, and denoted the triumph of innocence.

"Phoenix," so called from the fabulous bird of antiquity, which is said to have been renewed from its own ashes; and the name is often given to a house that has been rebuilt after fire—in this case, probably referring to the great fires that so often ravaged the town, especially East-street, during the sieges.

"Rose and Crown" no doubt dates back to the time of the wars of the Roses, this town having sided generally with the party of the White Rose.

"Royal Oak," so-named from an old oak tree, which formerly stood in front of the house, around which the badgers were baited, &c.

"Saracen's Head" is doubtless a very ancient sign, and dates from the time of the Crusades, or Holy Wars. It was generally painted as a very frightful figure, in a sense of ridicule.

"Sun," "Moon," "Seven Stars," send us back to a still earlier time, even to that when our Saxon forefathers worshipped the "Hosts of Heaven," and dedicated the days of the week to their memories.

"Shakespeare." It was formerly very usual to have a "Shakespeare Tavern" near every playhouse, which was the resort of the actors. One entrance to our old theatre is said to have been formerly through this inn yard.

"Spread Eagle." The eagle has ever been a favourite symbol among nations, and was used by the Romans, Russians, Prussians, Poles, French and Americans. The inn was probably the head-quarters of foreigners, or was kept by a refugee from one of the above nations.

"Sugar Loaf" is an unusual sign. At the old Sugar Loaf the first post-chaise was started in this town.

"Three Crowns," or "Triple Crown." The Pope, being the only wearer of such, it would denote that the house was the rendezvous of Roman Catholics.

"Three Mariners" is considered to denote the three first circumnavigators—Drake, Hawkins and Cavendish.

"Turk's Head" is of similar import to the Saracen's Head.

"White Hart" (by many considered a corruption of "White Heart"), and probably dating from the time of the wars of the White and Red Roses, the White being the favourite in this town, as above mentioned.

"Winchester Arms." Taunton was for many years under the protection of the Bishops of Winchester; hence the origin of this title, and the nearness of the house to the Castle.

Thus have we reviewed the most striking of the names of the inns in this town. There are many others which explain themselves, such as the emblems of various trades—the "Boot," the "Plough," the "Compass," &c., &c. Numbers are named from the popular heroes of the day, and consequently give a pretty correct idea of their antiquity; but it is somewhat curious that we never seem to have had an "Admiral Blake," or a "Duke of Monmouth" here, although the titles of such favourites in this town. Trade arms are a very frequent title, and many are yet retained. There was formerly "The Woolcembars' Arms," in this town; but as the trade ceased the title was lost with it. Our readers are

deubtless aware that previous to A.D. 1780 the whole of the space now occupied by the Market House and Parade was covered with a large number of small and decayed old buildings, and that there were no less than twelve public-houses among them. Upon lately turning over some old papers that have not seen daylight for many years we met with their names. They were—the "Butchers' Arms," "Unicorn," "Sugar Loaf," "Bull," "Norwich Arms," "Rose and Crown," "Plough," "Wheat Sheaf," "Antelope," "Salutation," "Three Swains," and "Ball."

As time moves on, and the fame of once-renowned heroes becomes gradually lost, so great changes are made in the names and titles of inns. We had once a "Bishop Blaize" in Taunton, and we may well be asked who that reverend gentleman was who had such an ominous name. Probably a bishop of Smithfield in Roman Catholic days? No, gentle reader, he was an inoffensive man, and was adopted by the woolcombers (once very numerous in this town) as their patron saint.

The "London Inn" was formerly called the "Three Cups." There was a "Fountain" near the Castle, and a "Three Widows" in East-street. This name is said to be a corruption of "The Milliners," and the house to have been an emporium of the fashions of the day.

Formerly the ease of getting a license for the sale of wines and spirits caused a number of public-houses to be opened. There were then very few spirit-vaults, or wine-shops, and many of the old names were lost when the inns were converted into the modern "palaces."

We confess we have some kind of love for the old emblems and curious signs. They add to the picturesque appearance of a town when well chosen and artistically executed. Although, from the rapid progress of education, by which nearly all our lower classes are enabled to read the name and trade, they are yet useful to those few to whom, either from youth, want of advantage, or loss of memory, a printed sign is but as a combination of unmeaning strokes. They also, as before mentioned, give a character and a picturesque appearance to a house. Compare the many gabled, heavily-mullioned old tavern, with its deep roof, projecting porch, twisted chimneys (the very funnels of hospitality), not forgetting the curiously-carved "Black Lion," or "White Hart"—compare all these combined with the modern seven yards of red brick wall, with six oblong holes for light and entrance, or with your split and dab, lath and plaster façade, with an expensive gutter and parapet to carry all the snow-water into your house and to hide your roof, which ought to be one of your most imposing and characteristic features. But, thanks to Pugin, Ruskin and others of this day, we are returning

to the love of the beautiful and the picturesque, as well of the true and the real.

Some of the facts connected with the above subject were collected from some papers prepared by Savage after he had published his history of Taunton in 1822, and consequently did not appear in his book.

### Antiquarian Relics.

The Somersetshire Archaeological Society having invited its members and others to contribute information respecting objects of interest which would be useful in the formation of a complete history of the county, we have endeavoured in the following lines in an humble way to add our mite. We are aware how incomplete is the list; but its publication may lead others to follow up the subject:—

**TAUNTON CASTLE** contains the site of the Norman keep. Fragments of some walls and buildings of the eleventh century, some towers and windows of the Edwardian period, several interesting coats of arms carved in stone, with dates, &c., and some good examples of the masonry of Henry VII.'s reign. The Eastern gateway, leading from Fore-street into Castle Green, is in good preservation.

**TAUNTON PRIORY**.—The Priory barn contains two Hamstone windows and a doorway of good design, and some ancient masonry. There are some large arched cellars at Priory-gate, which are said to have formed part of the Priory stores.

**RISDON HOUSE**.—In 1858 almost the last vestiges of the Carmelite Monastery were taken down, and deposited in the archaeological museum. Portions of the East wall and the doorway are still in existence, although out of sight.

**MONKTON ALMSHOUSE**.—The ancient leper-house at the bottom of East Beach yet stands, and has a nicely-carved coat of arms in stone on the front wall.

**ST. JAMES'S CHURCH**.—The tower was a fine example of mediæval architecture. Some of the windows, the font, the pillars of the church, &c., are worthy of attention. Tessellated pavement has been found in the churchyard. Portions of the cross are in the museum.

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH**.—The North aisle, the hagioscope, several of the windows and pillars, and especially the panelled arch of the tower, deserve notice. On the porch is a shield with a date.

**WILTON CHURCH**.—There are a few features in this church which denote its age. The windows and pillars are probably all left that deserve attention.

**THE OLD COLLEGE SCHOOL**.—The old school-room, with its many-mullioned windows; the moulded oak roof (in the

dormitory, restored); and portions of the master's residence, call for remark.

**THE PORTMAN MANSION**, on the South side of Fore-street, for years past tenanted by the Turle family, is a fine example of domestic architecture of the past ages. The North front, and also some of the adjoining houses, attract the attention of strangers. There is some fine oak carved panelling at the entrance of the adjoining court.

**THE OLD WHITE HART** is now lost to posterity as an hotel, and little is left of the original building.

**ST. JAMES'S-STREET.**—There is an old house about half-way up the North side of this street that has some curious work in plaster.

**FORE-STREET.**—A fine old fire-place at late Henderson's is handsome.

**MR. GOODMAN'S.**—The house at the South-west corner of Fore-street is reported to have contained the municipal apartments. One large room has a fine window and panelled plaster ceiling; also some curious figures of plaster over the fire-place, representing Abraham's sacrifice and emblem of Justice, blindfolded, &c. The rooms above also have enriched cornices of curious design. The entrance to Hunt's-court is doubtless mediæval.

**THE OLD LONDON-ROAD**, from Taunton to Bathpool, and from Taunton to Bumwell, has the reputation of being very ancient. The deep cutting near the old brickyard, and the old bridge called "Ramahorn," are worthy of notice.

There is a place called Plais-street, near the railway-station, which is said to be Roman.

**TAUNTON MONEY.**—The coins struck at Taunton mint before and after the Roman invasion should not be forgotten.

There are a few other places beyond those mentioned; but it seems surprising that a town of such antiquity as Taunton should be so destitute of mediæval relics as it appears to be. We should like to hear a satisfactory explanation given of the cause. Is it from the use of perishable stone or soft bricks, or from the great improvements and alterations that have been so often made, or from fire, or from the fact that but a small number of such buildings were in existence, or the whole and all combined? Certain it is that among the few left, many are disappearing, the old poor house in Church-square having been demolished, and both our old towers gone; and as to our churches, very little is left of the original edifices. Of our Priory scarcely anything remains, the splendid church dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul having entirely disappeared, also the church or chapel of St. Leonard, on the North side of the town, another dedicated to St. Margaret, on the Eastern side, and another to St.

Paul, on the West, besides a chapel at the castle; and as to the poor old Castle itself, what with time and the "improvements" (?) and alterations made by Sir Benjamin Hammet and others, little can be found of the original buildings. Our Guildhall, our market cross—all swept away, and not a stone to mark the site. It is to be hoped that some of the edifices lately erected in the revised style and taste will be of sufficient durability and strength to be handed down to posterity, as our fathers in times past delighted to erect memorials of their art for the benefit of those who followed them.

### Coats of Arms, &c.

Although heraldry is as ancient as the days of Moses, and was practised by the Greeks, Romans, and other nations, *English* heraldry only dates from the Middle Age—it having been introduced with tournaments, &c. When the knights fought covered with armour it was necessary that each should have some distinguishing symbol to enable their friends to know them. Arms may belong to individuals, families, places, or offices.

From the connection of the town with the Bishopric of Winchester we may expect that the arms of the old bishops of that venerable city would be amongst the oldest to be found here; and such, indeed, is the case, as an inspection of our old Castle will prove, although there may be some doubt as to the genuine nature of all to be seen there. Over the site of the drawbridge may be observed a shield bearing a bishop's mitre; and on the West side a coat of arms, much defaced, but probably also connected with Winchester. Over the exchequer, at the entrance tower of the Castle, may be seen two escutcheons—one placed between four roses and charged with a cross, on which are five roses, with this inscription, *Laus tibi Xpe, i.e., "Praise be to Thee, O Christ;"* and "T. Langton Winto, 1495"—Thomas Langton, Bishop of Winton (Winchester), who erected the building. Above the window are the arms of Henry VII., supported by a greyhound and a dragon, with the motto, *Vive le Roi Henri; i.e., "Long live King Henry."* On the North side of the gateway is the first escutcheon repeated, with the date 1495.

In front of the old Grand Jury room are the arms of Bishop Robert Horne (who built the old assize courts). They contain three bugle horns for the name "Horne," and the date 1577. There are also two mottoes.

Over a "scollop-shell" porch of about Queen Anne's reign, on the North side of the Eastern end of the Castle is a small shield (cast in lead), which contains the arms of the city of Bristol (a castle and a ship). The figures 1413 are under it; but what it means, or how it came there is beyond our comprehension.

At an old house on the North side of East-street, opposite Mount-lane, a capital plaster copy of the arms of Henry VII. was found a few years ago, and was removed to the Archaeological Society's Museum.

On the South end of the old Priory barn is a shield with three daggers. There are two copies of the seal of the Priory in existence. From the site of the old Carmelite Monastery was removed a short time since a shield bearing three tassels.

The arms on the ancient seal of the town of Taunton consists of a castle flanked by two circular towers, and on either side a mitre and crozier.

The old seal used by the late mayor bore a crown, with the motto, "Defendamus." The T and tun is a rebus on the word Taunton—T-on-tun.

At the College School are the arms of Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester—"A Pelican in her Piety," feeding her young—with the date 1522.

At St. Margaret's Hospital (or the old Leper House) is a finely-executed shield, surmounted by a jewelled mitre, with the letters R. B. in a cipher, considered to represent Richard Bere, who was Abbot of Glastonbury from 1493 to 1544.

Fixed in a wall at the East end of No. 52, North-street, is a stone shield, with a monogram, apparently the same letters, R. B. It will be remembered that similar letters were also to be found over the belfry window on the South side of St. Mary's tower.

On the ceiling of Mr. Goodman's—South-west corner of Fore-street—are shields bearing arms, probably those of early residents.

At Huish's and Grey's almshouses may be seen the arms of the founders, and many of the old monuments in the churches are decorated with family and other arms. When the churches were restored a few years since several painted glass windows were fixed, containing the arms of many county families and subscribers to the restoration fund. The arms of the Bishop of Bath and Wells may be observed in several places, including the National Schools.

At the present time several of the banks display armorial bearings on their netes. Messrs. Badcock, as the oldest and the representatives of the Taunton Bank, have those of the town.

Most of the public companies and corporations use seals, some of them deserving attention.

As regards the arms, crests and armorial bearings used by the resident and neighbouring gentry, they are far too numerous for us to attempt to give any description. Many of them are very ancient and curious, and would well repay the labour of investigation.

In conclusion we would suggest that it would be desirable

that the Archaeological Society should preserve copies of all those of a public nature, as well as all the seals now or formerly in use in this ancient town. Many of them are executed in perishable materials, and others are gradually passing away. A careful examination and account by a skilful person could not fail to contain much curious, useful and interesting information, and may possibly lead to the discovery of the lost, or at least unknown, arms of the county of Somerset.

### A Chat about the Taunton Newspapers, Past and Present.

The newspaper of the present day is one of the most extraordinary productions of the age, seeming as it does with news from all quarters of the globe. It is now become one of the necessities of life. It brings the divided human race into communication; and probably the Press has more power, for good or for evil, at its command, than any Society or Corporation in the world. But these extraordinary powers are new and young. A few years ago the papers were read but by a select number; but now they are within the reach of all classes. It is not our intention to write on newspapers generally, but to confine ourselves to such as have been established and published in this town.

The *Taunton Courier* is generally considered the oldest Taunton paper, and we must ask our readers to go back nearly one hundred years earlier if they wish to see the original. On Friday, the 21st May, 1725, appeared the first impression of the *Taunton Journal*, edited by William Norris, who in his opening number speaks of the many discouragements he had met with, but states his resolve (if God permits) to continue it. It was printed with large type, and consisted of four pages, the whole being about one-fourth the size of the old *Taunton Courier*, which was about half the size of the present paper; the price, three halfpence, including one halfpenny for stamp. We have before us a quantity of the news the first number contained, most of it being very "small talk;" but we extract a few choice bits:—

"Rome, April 28, 1725.—The conservator of the city presented the Pope with the head of a sturgeon, weighing 62lbs.; but his Holiness sent it to be divided amongst the poor. At the same time his Holiness presented Violante, the great Princess of Tuscany, with two bodies of saints, and some viols containing their blood."

"Madrid, May 1, 1725.—A certain holy sister, having prophesied that the five principal towns of Spain should be destroyed by fire from Heaven, the people were in terrible alarm, and the Court ordered public prayers."

"Paris, May 27.—The King of the French 'touched' a number of persons afflicted with the King's evil."

"London, May 7, 1725.—Mr. Wilson, a banker near Temple Bar, who had been a great loser by the South Sea Bubble, shot himself on Wednesday last."

"Most of the Foreign Ambassadors are going with his Majesty to Hanover."

"A party of men have been taken up at Southwark, who were found splitting farthings, silvering them over and passing them for sixpences."

"Jonathan Wild was tried this day for several capital crimes, and being found guilty was condemned to death without benefit of clergy." Then follows a long account of the doings of the said celebrated Jonathan Wild, who, it appears, had for many years carried on the occupation of thief-catcher, until he became so intimate with evil-doers that he followed their bad courses, and exacted "black mail" upon both friends and foes.

Such are a few passing events of the day recorded in the first Taunton newspaper. We have no information how long the *Taunton Journal* existed, but presume the editor to have been an ancestor of the Norris family, for many years so well known in Taunton for their great acquirements.

There is a monument in St. James's Church with a Latin inscription, which records the fact that Henry Norris (who was formerly engaged in tuition in this town) "diligently studied and critically understood twenty-four languages," and the editors of the histories of Taunton were both considerably indebted to the Norris family for much local information.

In 1794 there was a paper published in this town called the *Taunton Herald*, but we have little information to offer respecting it. In that year it contained the list of the Taunton Loyal Volunteers, then lately established.

We now pass on to Wednesday, 22nd September, 1808, when the late Mr. J. W. Marriott started and established the *Taunton Courier*, which has been published uninterruptedly ever since, and until the last few years by the spirited and talented gentleman who commenced it.

Mr. Marriott was a well-read man, and was noted in his day. He witnessed many eventful circumstances. We trust we may yet live to see a short biography published of his life and exploits.

For the purpose of obtaining the earliest and most authentic news he established a system of post-horses from London to Plymouth, so that the *Taunton Courier* took a high position among country newspapers. We believe Mr. Marriott was educated for a barrister, and that he numbered among his friends many men of talent and influence.

About eighteen years ago Mr. Marriott's age prevented his giving the attention to the *Taunton Courier* that was necessary. Mr. Frederick May, bookseller and printer, of High-street (and successor to the late well-known Mr. Poole), undertook its management. This continued for about ten years, when suddenly the *Courier* was transferred to the offices of Messrs. Bragg and Son, where it is now printed. At that time there was a weekly circulation of about 800 papers, called the *Farmers' Journal*, which was a cheap edition of the *Courier*, and which the late reporter of that paper endeavoured to keep up. So an arrangement was entered into with the proprietor of a small paper in a neighbouring town; and some Taunton news being added to the one already published, the *Taunton Farmers' Journal* came forth to the public as a rival to its late parent. A sudden and untimely death was the end of this young and unfortunate bantling.

The *Somerset County Gazette* was first published in 1837, upon Liberal principles, and was edited by Mr. E. W. Cox, the proprietor, and printed by Mr. William Bragg, at his printing-offices in Paul-street. It soon acquired a large circulation, and for many years was a most popular newspaper. To make its way against such a respectable and old-established rival as the *Taunton Courier* it was necessary to act in a very pushing and liberal manner. We have before us a Somerset Directory, of upwards of four hundred pages, that was presented gratuitously, to its subscribers. The book contained much valuable information, and considerable time and expense must have been incurred in compiling it. A few years afterwards the *Gazette* passed into the hands of Mr. W. A. Woodley, the present proprietor and editor, and the printing was executed at Tangier. Many changes have been made in this paper since its commencement. During the Crimea war a pictorial newspaper was published in Taunton by Mr. Woodley, who is also proprietor and editor of another Taunton paper, called the *Western News*.

In 1842 the *Somerset County Herald* was started by Mr. William Bragg, advocating Conservative politics. It circulates throughout the West of England, and contains all the news of the day. The offices were removed from Cheapside and Paul-street to more extensive premises at the Parade, where it is yet published by the same gentleman.

There have been several attempts to establish other papers. The *Chronicle* enjoyed a short life, if not a merry one, under the presidency of Mr. F. A. Clarke, of Fore-street.

About the time of the general election of 1869 a newspaper was started called the *Western Weekly Advertiser and Conservative Record*, which enjoyed but a short life;



and at the same time there was another that was published by Webb, of Bath-place, under various titles. Soon after the excitement of the election passed away we heard no more of them; but for some time previously Savage's History of Taunton was continued weekly in one or both of them.

There are at present, we believe, other papers printed in Taunton for distant towns, and under various titles; but as we are not in the secrets of their owners we forbear taking more notice of them.

Within the last few years every little town must have its local papers. In many cases one-half of them are published in London, and as the remainder consists principally of advertisements, no great amount of ability is necessary.

In conclusion we would observe that as the writers and editors of newspapers in a great measure lead the opinions of the public, we trust that they may ever be found on the side of honour, religion, and all that is noble and good, so that "the fourth estate of the realm" may be a blessing as well as a necessity to the people of this happy country.

### Taunton and the Sale of Taunton Banns.

#### "OUR LOCAL LITERATURE."

Some of the Books, Papers, Pamphlets, &c., published in Taunton or by residents in that town and neighbourhood.

"Come, my best friends, my Books;  
And lead me on."

*Cowley.*

"Books, dear Books, have been  
And are my comfort morn and night."

*Dr. Dodd.*

"Books cannot always please, however good;  
Minds are not ever craving for their food."

*Crabbe.*

Although we do not claim for Taunton the title of being altogether a literary town, yet a number of students and thoughtful men have ever been found among its inhabitants, who have at various times aspired to authorship; and we presume that an outline-list of the names of the writers and their works will prove an interesting subject, and may possibly induce some amongst us to devote a little spare time to that employment, instead of spending it in a less instructive and improving manner—for writing necessarily tends to reading, examination of books, inquiry, and entertaining conversation.

It is well known that previous to the Reformation books were scarce, and that the few that were in existence were chiefly produced by the monks. In most monasteries was a room specially devoted for the purpose, where illuminations and writings were practised. At the general intro-

duction of printing which followed soon after, books became more numerous, and were written chiefly on theological subjects.

In the reign of Elizabeth the arts and sciences were cultivated, and consequently books were written on these subjects, but probably at no time did England produce so many first-rate authors as during the reign of Queen Anne.

The controversy on ecclesiastical subjects, brought on by the statute on Uniformity, occasioned the writing and printing of many books, in which several Taunton men took part, both for and against the Church of England.

During the "Georgian era," literature, like architecture and the fine arts, was at a very low ebb. The public taste seemed partial to heathen mythology, and the poems of the day abounded with allusions to Charons, Vulcans, Cupids, Proserpines, &c., &c. Taunton also shared the general taste. We have before us several books by townsmen on these subjects.

But we presume no age has produced so many effusions as the present. On every subject writers are abundant, and the great difficulty seems to be to find original matter; and here again Taunton follows the national taste.

It will be observed that our catalogue embraces books and papers on various subjects. Many of them have been written on the passing events of the day, and are consequently of no great interest afterwards, but at the same time some will be found of general use and of considerable value to future generations.

It cannot be expected that a list made with very little assistance would contain the names and works of *all* the writers of the town and neighbourhood. We have inserted all that we are acquainted with, and if some of the numerous readers would kindly assist us by supplying such omissions, or suggesting any errors as may appear to them, we shall esteem it as a favour.

To make a complete list a considerable time would be necessary, and a reference to many libraries and museums, which we confess we have neither the time or means to accomplish.

#### NAMES AND PARTICULARS, DATES, BOOKS OR PAPERS.

##### A

Alleine, Rev. Joseph, Taunton (1670)—Call to the Unconverted.

Amory, Dr. Thomas, Taunton (1724)—Poem on Taunton, and several theological works.

Alfred the Great, Athelney (870)—Translations of the Psalms, and Civil and National Laws.

Anon, Taunton—A poem, entitled "The Voyage."

Anonymous, Taunton (1828)—Poem on Glastonbury Abbey.

Anonymous, Taunton (1866)—*Legend of the Tone*.  
Also Anonymous, Letter, Mabel, "Hades" (1861)—*The Contrabandists of Minehead*.

Archæological Society, Taunton (1848)—*Annual Proceedings* (abbreviated to A. S. P.).

Ainslie, Rev. A. C., Corfe (1856)—*Indian Mutiny; Lecture on Steam; Smokey Chimneys; Education, &c.*

Alford, Henry, Taunton (1863)—*Natural History, A. S. P.* [See *Archæological Society's Proceedings*.]

## B

Bampton, K., Taunton (1866)—"*Our Own Fireside*," a Collection of Poems, &c.

Beaden, Capt., Taunton (1858)—"*On Doubled-Bodied Ships*," &c.

Bond, John, A.M., Taunton College (1866)—*Annotations in Poemata Quinti Horatii*.

Boswell, John, A.M., Vicar of St. Mary's (1738)—*A method of Study; or, the Useful Library*. [MSS. on the Assyrian Empire.]

Barker, Rev. Alfred, College School (1820)—*A Volume of Sermons*.

Blake, Malachi, M.D., Taunton (1809)—*Letters which originated the Taunton Hospital*.

Baker, William, A. S. P. (1858)—*Papers on Natural History*.

Babin, Dr., Taunton (1862)—*The Model Speaker, a Guide to French conversation*.

Billet, James, Taunton (1854)—*Salt for the Church; Rise and Fall of the French Republic; Life of Calvin, &c., &c.*

Bell, P., Taunton (1864)—*Poem on the Vale of Taunton Deane, &c.*

Bragg, Wm., Taunton (1840)—*Conversations; Somerset Directory; County Herald, &c.*

Bernard, Rev. S. E., St. James's, Taunton (1847)—*On the Power of God*.

Ball, W., a Poem (1846)—*Creation*.

B. K., Taunton (1862)—"*Dreamland*," poem, in three parts.

## C

Cresswell, Rev., Creech—*A weekly paper, "The Tauntonian."*

Clarke, A. A., Taunton—*Various sketches and views of the town and neighbourhood*.

Cranmer, Thomas, Archdeacon of Taunton (1622)—*Several theological and polemical works*.

Coryate, T., Somerset (1611)—*The Erudites*.

Charity Commissioners Feoffees (1823)—*The Will of Richard Huish, of Taunton*.

Cocking, Geo., Taunton (1812)—*Meditation among the Tombs*.

Cottle, Rev. Jas., LL.D., Vicar of St. Mary's (1844)—*History of St. Mary's Church; Life of a Young Disciple; Sermons, &c.*

Crotch, Dr., Mus., Taunton (1830)—*Several musical works*.

Crotch, Rev. W. E., Taunton College (1848)—*Papers on Natural History, A. S. P.*

Crotch, W. D., Taunton College (1851)—*Birds of Somerset, A. S. P.*

Carter, C., Taunton (1800)—*Set of Views of Taunton*.

Collinson, Rev. John, Somerset (1795)—*History of Somerset*.

Cox, E. W., Taunton (1838)—*The Opening of the Sixth Seal (1840)—Papers on the town of Taunton; Where am I, What am I, &c. (1860)—Several London weekly papers and numerous Law works (1834)—The Scheme of Creation (1868)—The Art of Speaking, &c.*

Crosse, Andrew, Broomfield (1848)—*Papers on Natural History; Holwell Cavern, A. S. P. (1834)—Papers in the Taunton Conversations*.

Christmas, Rev., Taunton (1864)—*Church Furniture*.

Christmas, Miss, Taunton (1846)—"*Glendearry Cottage*;" "*The Youth's Safeguard*."

Christmas, H. Taunton (1833)—"*The Voyage*," a poem.

Collins, Elizabeth, Taunton (1864)—"*Memories of Southern States*."

Clarke, Rev. J. B., Bagborough (1850)—*On the Education of Somerset, &c., &c.*

Carter, Rev. J. E., Kingston (1847)—*Christian Grave-stones*.

Chaville, Gouly D. C., Taunton (1860)—*On the Pronunciation of the French Language*.

Clark, Rev. W. R., Vicar of St. Mary's (1861)—*The Doctrine of Christian Baptism and Justification; Vol. of Sermons—the Prodigal Son, the Redeemer, the Comforter; Translations of German, &c.*

Clarke, F. B., printer (1862)—*Weekly newspaper; Chaucer Modernized*.

Crocker, Taunton (1860)—*The Universe*.

## D

Daniel, Samuel—*Poet Laureate and Historian, 16th century*.

David, Rev. Job, Unitarian minister (1803)—*Scriptural Doxologies; Letters and Papers on the Evidence of Christianity and Infant Baptism*.

Dance, Rev. G., M.A., Taunton (1858)—*Collection of Hymns for the use of Churches*.

Draper, John, Milverton (1860)—*Poem and Notes on Somerset and the Severn Sea*.

Dymock, Rev. T. F., A. S. P. (1860)—*Papers on the Coinage of Somerset, and other subjects*.

Denison, Rev. G. A., Archdeacon of Taunton (1860)—Various Papers and Writings in Defence of the Church of England, and on Theological Subjects.

Doveton, Capt., Taunton (1858)—Reminiscences of the Burmese War.

Down, Langdon—Nature's Balance.

## E

Escott, Rev. Hay, College School (1848)—Sermons on the Christian Service.

Everard, Dr., Bishop's Hall (1848)—*Latia Grammar*.

Elliot, W. E., Taunton (1863)—Papers on Archaeological Subjects, &c., A. S. P.

Eedaile, E. J., Cethelstone—On Agricultural matters.

## F

Fawcett, Benjamin, Independent minister (1741)—On the Doctrine of the Trinity. (1745)—The Grand Enquiry; the Sacred Almoner; Pious Meditations; Religious Melancholy, &c.

## G

Gale, Rev. H. (1859)—"The Sons of Light."

Grove, Rev. H., Dissenting minister—Papers in the Spectator, and other learned works.

Giles, W. E., architect (1858)—Architectural and Archaeological Subjects, A. S. P.

Guest, Rev., Paul's Meeting (1860)—Sermons, &c., &c.

Goodman, E., Printer (1863)—Taunton Directory.

Gifford, Isabella, Somerset (1853)—Marine Botany.

Grueber, Rev. C. J., Hambridge (1860)—Collection of Chants.

Gwynne, D. W. G., M.D., Taunton (1859)—On Fire and Terrestrial Heat.

Godson, Rev. E., Taunton (1858)—On the Divine Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

Gurnett, James, Taunton (1860)—The Present State of the Jews.

Glendenning, C., near Taunton (1859)—On the Culture of the Pine Apple.

## H

Hall, Capt. Byng, Taunton—The Great Exhibition of 1851.

Harte, Walter, Taunton (1767)—The Amaranth and other Poems. (1768)—Life of Gustavus Adolphus.

Hammond, George, M.A., Independent minister—Vol. of Family Prayers; the Good Minister.

Hartford, Emanuel, pastor of St. Paul's Chapel (1725)—Practical Discourses on many Subjects; Vol. of Sermons.

Harrison, Richard, A.M., Independent minister (1747)—Letters on Infant Baptism; Foundling Hospital.

Hurley, Rev. James, B.A., Taunton College (1725)—The Divine Mission of the Messiah; Motion of the Sun. (1760)—History of the Creation; Heliptical Astronomy.

Hugo, Rev. Thomas, Taunton (1860)—Numerous Papers on Archaeological Subjects, A. S. P. (1866)—Ramble by the Tone; Life of Bewick; Somersetshire Monasteries, &c.

Hewett, Norton Fitzwarren (1848)—Account of the Restoration of Norton Church.

Hancock, Hades—The House of Many Mansions.

## I J

Ina, King, Taunton (702)—National Laws.

Independent, The Young (Periodically) (1858)—The Independent College, Taunton.

Jears, Rev. Henry, Taunton (1647)—Thanksgiving Sermon on the Siege of Taunton.

Johnson, William, minister of Paul's Chapel (1765)—Ordination Charge.

Jones, R. L., Blagden (1860)—Papers on Geological Subjects, &c.

Jones, Rev. W. A., Taunton (1860)—Papers on Taunton and Geological Subjects, &c. (1864)—Geology of the Quantocks, &c., &c.

Jeboult, E., Taunton (1866)—Papers on the History of Taunton; Recollections of the Tone; History of West Somerset.

## K

Kinglake, Taunton (1800)—On the Gout.

Knollys, F. M., D.D., near Taunton (1863)—A Tutor's Counsel.

King, R. M., Walford (1860)—Description of West Monkton Parish, &c., A. S. P.

King, Rev. (1868)—"Little Mabel."

Kinglake, Taunton (1840)—Eöthen, Travels in the East, and History of the Crimean War, &c.

## L

Locke, Richard, Burnham (1780)—MSS. Papers on the History of Taunton; Customs of Taunton Deane.

Lytton, Lady Bulwer, Taunton (1864)—"Very Successful," and several other Novels.

Leakey, Taunton (1856)—Poem, Tales of Travel.

Langdon, Taunton (1853)—Nature's Balance.

Lee, K. M., R.N., Taunton (1834)—Various Papers in the "Taunton Conversations."

Langhorne, Rev. F., Curate of St. Mary's (1847)—Sermons, &c.

## M

Markwick, Nat., Vicar of St. Mary's (1700)—On the Seventy Weeks; the Apocalyptic Vision.

Marriot, John W., Taunton (1808)—Taunton Courier Newspaper, &c.

May, F., Taunton (1860)—Ditto, ditto.

Macmullen, Mrs., Taunton (1864)—Juvenile History of Taunton.

Mansell, Rev. James, Curate of St. James's (1847)—Sermons.

Middleton, Rev. J. W., Dunston (1847)—The Hills of Help.

Mills, Arthur, M.P. for Taunton (1858)—Debate on India, and other Books.

Meynier, Victor, Independent College (1864)—A Senior French Grammar.

Miller, Rev. J. A., Isle Brewers (1864)—The Third Commandment.

Morley, W., Taunton (1865)—Numerous Photographic Views of Taunton.

Mortimer (1857)—"The Future of Farming."

Mickleburgh, Rev. J., Ashill—Geographical Index to Maps, for the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

#### N

Newton, George, Vicar of St. Mary (1646)—"Man's Wrath and God's Praise." (1675)—Life of Joseph Alleyne; several Sermons; the Christian Character, &c.

Norris, Henry, Taunton (1774)—Poems on various Subjects; "The Balles of Taunton."

Newberry, T., Taunton (1850)—Prophetic Subjects.

#### O

Oakley, W., Taunton (1856)—On the Police Force; on the Magistracy.

#### P

Popham, Chief Justice—On the Laws of England.

Pearsall, Richard, Paul's Chapel (1740)—Several Funeral and other Sermons.

Poole, James (publisher, 1820)—Observations on Architecture.

Parr, Rev. H., Vicar of St. Mary's (1850)—"The Canticles;" Church of England Psalmody.

Pring, Dr., Taunton (1864)—Memoir of Thomas Chard, the last Abbot of Ford Abbey.

Portman, Rev. F. B., Staple (1860)—Remarks on the Rubrics.

Pring, Daniel, M.D., (1840)—Various Medical and Metaphysical Works.

Prior, Dr., Halse (1864)—Botanical works.

Pinchard, Taunton—Papers at the Archaeological Society's Conversazione.

Parr, Capt., Taunton—Pictures, &c., of India.

Pring, J. D., Taunton (1843)—Articles on Geology in the Taunton Notes and Queries; Geological Map of Somerset.

Pomeroy, R., Taunton—Views of Taunton.

Pridham, Taunton (1860)—Musical Compositions.

Pridham, Rev. John—The Church of England.

Pulman, G., Crewkerne—Book of the Axe, Rustic Sketches, &c.

#### R

Reader, Thomas, Independent minister (1780)—The Revelation of St. John; "Israel's Salvation."

R. G. B., Taunton (1860)—"Taunton," and other Poems.

#### S

Smith, Rev. Sydney, Combe Flerey (1840)—Sermons St. Paul's; Peter Plyndell Papers; Sketches; Moral Philosophy; Lectures; General Works; three vols. American Sketches.

Shillibeer, H., Taunton (1839)—On the Customs of Taunton Deane.

Sweeting, Miss—Views near Taunton.

Savage, James, librarian, Taunton (1821)—History of Taunton (1822)—Memorabilia; also "The Librarian;" History of the Hundred of Carhampton; an Account of Scarce and Valuable Books.

Summerhayes, Samuel, Taunton (1840)—Musical Compositions.

Stone, Rev. W., Taunton (1845)—Poem on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.

Sanford, W. A., Nynhead (1866)—Various Papers on Natural History, A. S. P., &c.

Stephenson, Rev., near Taunton (1860)—"Glimpses of the West," and Poems.

Speke, Capt. J. H., Jordans—"The Sources of the Nile."

Scarlett, J. S., Taunton (1866)—The Writer's Enchiridion; the Orthographer's Palladium.

Spencer, Rev. J. W., Wilton (1863)—Several Papers on Theological Matters and Sermons.

Stembridge, Rev. H. H., Taunton (1860)—Marriage and Burial Service for Baptist Congregations.

Smith, Dr., Taunton (1859)—On the Ear.

Smith, Rev. F. J., Taunton (1858)—A Sermon about a Window; St. John's Hymn Book.

#### T

Taunton, Lord—Numerous Speeches and Addresses (see Parliamentary debates).

Trenchard, John, M.P. for Taunton (1698)—On Standing Armies; Cato's Letters; the Independent Whig.

Toulmin, Dr., Taunton (1796)—History of Taunton. (1814)—"Protestant Dissenters."

Toogood, Dr., Somerset (1860)—Life of a Medical Student.

Tuckwell, Rev., Taunton College (1865)—Papers on Natural History, A. S. P.; Education.

Tucker, W., Norton (1854)—On Freemasonry.

Tucker, Rev. H. T., Angersleigh (1859)—A Lecture on Lectures.

Trenchard, H. C., Taunton (1834)—Articles in the Taunton Conversazione.

Taunton Market Acts, Taunton (1859)—By order of the Trustees.

Turle, Taunton (1820)—Views of St. Mary's Church.

#### U V

Upton, Rev. James, A.M., College School (1696)—Aristotle's Art of Poetry. (1702)—"Dionysius Halicarnassus." (1726)—Several Greek Works.

#### W

Ward, Samuel, Archdeacon of Taunton (1609)—Assisted in the Translation of the Bible; several Tracts and other Works.

Whinnell, Thomas, minister of Taunton (1699)—"The Best Portion"—a Funeral Sermon.

Wolff, Dr., Isle Brewers (1840)—Travels in the East.

Warre, Rev. F., Lydeard (1860)—Many Papers on Archaeological and Architectural Subjects, A. S. P.

Woodley, W. A., Taunton (1844)—*Somerset County Gazette*, and other newspapers; *Farmers' Magazine*; *Notes and Queries*; Musical Compositions, &c.

Woodley, Augusta, Taunton (1864)—Musical Compositions.

Weymouth, Taunton (1859)—Poems on various Subjects.

Wing, Rev., Taunton (1847)—Sermons on Disobedience.

Welman, C. N., Norton (1857)—Lecture on the Soil and its Physical Qualities.

Wilmot, R., Taunton—Volumes of Receipts and Anecdotes.

Woodforde, F. H., Dr., Taunton (1857)—The Chemistry of Agriculture; Papers on Natural History.

Woodley, Rev. George—The Divinity of Christ; Redemption, a poem in two books; History of the Scilly Isles, Prize Essays, and many other works.

#### X

X X X (1866)—County Finance.

#### Y

Young, T., Taunton (1773)—Philosophical Subjects.

Young, T., Milverton—Numerous Works.

Du Santoy, Rev., Vicar of Mark—Various Books on Divinity.

As has been observed, although many of the foregoing works were written on the passing events of the day, and many more on mere local subjects, there may be found among them some few standard books that have taken their place in our national literature, which has done much in placing England among the first of the nations, and encouraged the love of letters and the fine arts.

Our readers will also notice that we have confined our researches almost entirely to our own town and its immediate neighbourhood. Had we extended it to the whole of the county, or even of West Somerset, the list would have been much longer, for we remember that it was among the

Quantocks that Coleridge composed some of his sweetest lays, where he was visited by Southey, Shelley, and other celebrities, and that Somerset claims the great Locke as her son.

There are many others whom we probably could recall to our recollection did time and space permit; but sufficient have been mentioned to cause Tauntonians to feel a pride in the place of their birth or residence, and to excite in their minds some desire to follow their example.

### Residences.

The following is a list of the principal residents near Taunton, with the names of their seats or mansions:—

Amberd House, Trull, Dr. Woodforde.

Batt's House, Trull, Miss Passmore.

Barton Grange, Pitminster, F. W. Newton, Esq.

Barr House, Bishop's Hull, — Knight, Esq.

Bindon House, Milverton, H. Warre, Esq.

Bathealton Court, Bathealton, H. G. Moysey, Esq.

Broadlands, Wilton, T. Hartley, Esq.

Belmont, Wilton, J. Marshall, Esq.

Bagborough House, Bagborough, M. F. Bissett, Esq.

Bishop's Hull House, Bishop's Hull, Capt. Patton.

Canon's Grove, Pitminster, V. J. Reynolds, Esq.

Court Place, West Monkton, Mrs. Kinglake.

Cothelstone House, Bishop's Lydeard, E. J. Eadale, Esq.

Courtlands, Norton Fitzwarren, Dr. Gover.

Coombe Florey House, Coombe Florey, Mrs. Helyar.

Creechbarrow, West Monkton, Capt. Beadon, R.N.

Chillieswood, Trull, Mrs. Vibart.

Crowcombe Court, Crowcombe, G. H. W. Carew, Esq.

Comeytrow House, Trull.

Dean Court, Bishop's Lydeard.

Dillington House, Ilminster, J. Lee Lee, Esq.

Eastbrooke House, Trull, A. G. Lethbridge, Esq.

Elms, The, Taunton, Mrs. Badcock.

Elmfield, Taunton, Dr. Pring.

Enmore Castle, Enmore, Mrs. Fuller.

Frethay House, Bishop's Hull, W. G. Maclean, Esq.

Fitzhead Court, Fitzhead, J. E. Knollys, Esq.

Fairfield, Stogursey.

Flook House, Taunton, — Metford, Esq.

Fyne Court, Broomfield, J. C. Hamilton, Esq.

Gatchell House, Trull, Rev. W. J. Allen.

Gotton House, West Monkton, J. Beadon, Esq.

Halwell House, Gouthurst.

Hatch Court, Hatch Beauchamp, Mrs. Hardstaff.

Hatch Park, Hatch Beauchamp, S. G. Langton, Esq.

Heatherton Park, Bradford, Mrs. A. Adair.

Hemlade House, Ruishton, — Anderdon, Esq.

Haloon Lodge, West Monkton—Rev. Du Santoy.

Haygrass, Pitminster, O. Malet, Esq.  
 Hestercombe, Kingston, Miss Warre.  
 Hinton House, Hinton St. George, Lord Poulett.  
 Highlands, Wilton, E. Beadon, Esq.  
 Jordans, Ashill, William Speke, Esq.  
 Knoyle House, Trull, Col. Adair.  
 Laversdown, Thurloxton, Lady Cooper.  
 Leigh Court, Angersleigh, Mrs. Tucker.  
 Lynchfield House, Bishop's Lydeard, Mrs. Gardiner.  
 Lyngford House, Taunton, Capt. Allen.  
 Lydeard House, Bishop's Lydeard, Cecil Smith, Esq.  
 Lowton House, Pitminster, Robert Mattock, Esq.  
 Lower Gatchell, Trull, — Pinney, Esq.  
 Lodge, The, Hatch Beauchamp, George Raban, Esq.  
 Maryville, Trull, T. Meyler, Esq.  
 Maunsel Grange, North Petherton, Sir Alfred Slade.  
 Monkton House, West Monkton, Capt. Shuldham.  
 Manor House, Bishop's Hull.  
 Manor House, Thorne Falcon, E. Batten, Esq.  
 Monty's Court, Norton, Col. Buss.  
 Moredon, North Curry, Major Barrett.  
 Milligan Hall, Bishop's Hull, H. Byne, Esq.  
 Norton Court, Norton Fitzwarren, Mrs. Hewett.  
 Netherolay House, Bishop's Hull, Rev. — Bousfield.  
 Norton Manor, Norton Fitzwarren, C. N. Welman, Esq.  
 Nynhead Court, Nynhead, W. A. Sanford, Esq.  
 Orchard House, Orchard Portman, E. Coles, Esq.  
 Orchard Wyndham, Williton, Countess of Egremont.  
 Otterhead House, Otterhead, Sir J. Mellor, Knt.  
 Osborne House, Wilton, W. F. Elliott, Esq.  
 Pinkhurst, Staplegrove, C. Turner, Esq.  
 Pitminster Lodge, Pitminster, Capt. Peard.  
 Pyrland Hall, Taunton, A. Malet, Esq.  
 Poundisford Lodge, Pitminster, Mrs. Helyar.  
 Poundisford Park, Pitminster, Miss Campbell.  
 Quantock Lodge, Stowey, Lady Taunton.  
 Rumwell House, Bishop's Hull, Mrs. Petton.  
 Rumwell Lodge, Bishop's Hull, Capt. Tomlin.  
 St. Andries' House, Quantoxhead, Sir A. Hood, Bart.  
 Sandhill Park, Bishop's Lydeard.  
 Stoke Court, Stoke St. Mary, Major Altham.  
 Springfield House, West Monkton, J. Paine, Esq.  
 Spring-grove, Milverton, J. Spurway, Esq.  
 Sidbrooke House, West Monkton, Mrs. Bealey.  
 Staple House, Staple Fitzpaine, Rev. F. B. Portman.  
 Tainfield House, Kingston, W. E. Surtees, Esq.  
 The Grange, Kingston, C. F. Perkins, Esq.  
 Tremlett House, Ashbrittle, — Manley, Esq.  
 Tetton House, Kingston.  
 Walford House, West Monkton, E. K. M. King, Esq.  
 Willett House, Elworthy, J. Blommart, Esq.

Woodlands, Ruishon, Hon. Major Napier.  
 Wilton Park, Taunton, Dr. Kinglake.  
 Watts House, Bishop's Lydeard, John Winter, Esq.  
 Wey House, Norton, W. Slade, Esq.  
 Wheatleigh, Wilton, H. Badcock, Esq.

### The Masonic Lodge of Unanimity and Sincerity, No. 261, Taunton.

This Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons was first instituted at Ilminster in 1788, and was removed to this town on the 18th of September, 1797. It generally numbers from 60 to 80 highly-respectable subscribing members. In 1818 it received the warrant from the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch-Masons to hold lodges in that degree, since which time a Rose Croix Chapter and an Encampment of Knights Templars have been added. The meetings take place in the Winter months on the first Wednesdays on or after the full moon, at seven p.m., at Clarke's Hotel, Castle Green.

As will be seen above, the Taunton Lodge has been established nearly 79 years. It has survived many vicissitudes, at one time its few members being in such poor circumstances that the best spread they could afford, after holding their meetings and going through their work, was toasted cheese, in commemoration of which circumstance cheese is now always placed on the table at supper-time.

This Lodge has received several advances. In 1822 it was No. 497; in 1840 No. 327, and has lately been altered to No. 261. It has included amongst its members numbers of the great and influential men of this town and neighbourhood, and has taken part in many of the principal events of the borough. It has offered assistance to many "poor and distressed brethren," and stretched forth a fatherly hand in providing shelter and education for numerous orphans. Its funds are in a flourishing state, and it liberally subscribes to all Masonic charities. We believe there are but few other Lodges in England that do this. The work is carried on in a regular and creditable manner; it is constantly visited by the Provincial Grand Master, who held his Provincial Grand Lodge in this town a few years ago, and many members of the Taunton Lodge had the honour of receiving the purple collar.

It is probably well-known to most of our readers that the peculiar tenets of Masonry forbid its members printing or making known anything that takes place within a Lodge, nor are they allowed to solicit strangers to join their craft; but without breaking these rules, we may perhaps venture to make the following remarks for the



benefit of those who have never been so fortunate as to embrace its doctrines.

Freemasonry is not what it is vulgarly said to be, namely, a mere collection of curious customs without use or meaning, nor is it merely a species of passport whereby one member is enabled to distinguish another; but it is a kind of universal religion, inculcating most excellent morality, teaching peace and good-will to all its members. It was doubtless in existence in the earliest times, for a good Mason can trace it throughout the Bible. It contains most instructive symbols, types and secrets, and was practised by many great and good men, probably from the creation. By it was Solomon's temple built, and it is neither contrary to the laws of God or man; and it may be summed up in these few words, which are admitted by all who know its mysteries—"That a good Mason must be a good man."

In reply to the remark that it contains no secrets, otherwise they would have been sure to have been made known, we answer that the statement of all its members in all ages, that it *does* contain many secrets, ought to be taken as some evidence. Another reason is, that as no books or writings are used, and the members are solemnly sworn to secrecy, everything is conducted by a sort of question and answer system, which requires a knowledge on the part of both, and nothing would be gained by improperly divulging its secrets but lasting disgrace.

It is a fact that a Mason can distinguish a brother Mason in any part of the world, no matter of what nation or language; and many a poor wanderer has been hospitably and safely received upon its merits.

In this highly favoured land, blessed with the Christian religion, full political liberty, and extended civilisation, Masonry would appear to us to be as the silver Moon shining in the golden daylight of Christianity; but in less favoured countries, which are without these blessings, Masonry may be of the utmost use, second only to Christianity itself.

We are quite prepared to admit that few Masons act up to its high standard, for not one in twenty takes the trouble to follow out its full teachings; but we fear the same objection may be made even to the Christian religion. We conclude by a quotation from the speech of a well-known gentleman of considerable local influence and authority:—"The high moral suggestions which Masonry continually afford are calculated not only to make the man who is already a real Christian look with increased veneration and love upon the truths of the Gospel, and cling to them more closely, but to make the stranger to Christianity crave that enlightenment which nothing but God's revelation in Christ can effectually give him."

To our non-Masonic friends, who may wish further information on its tenets, we would recommend the perusal of a discourse delivered before the Provincial Grand Lodge of Somerset, at Wells, by the Rev. Dr. Wallis, late of Taunton, and ordered by them to be printed. It can be had of Mr. May, High-street, for 6d.

### The Taunton Cemetery.

"The path of glory leads but to the grave."—Pope.

The custom of extra-mural interment is very ancient, and it was left for the latter ages, with all their boasted advancement, to sanction the habit of choking their churches and graveyards in an unseemly manner. The old term of "God's Acre" would imply that our forefathers selected the open country rather than the crowded town for their burial-places. Longfellow beautifully expresses his idea on the subject—

I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls  
The burial-ground "God's Acre!" It is just;  
It consecrates each grave within its walls,  
And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust.

Taunton, like most old towns, has suffered the inconvenience and unhealthiness of over-filled graveyards; but when, in the year 1849, the victims of the epidemic at the Union Workhouse were brought from the outskirts and deposited by scores in the very heart of the town, it was acknowledged that the time was come to take the subject in hand without further delay. Accordingly a general cemetery for the whole of the parishes in the town was proposed; but as those of St. James and Wilton had lately enlarged their churchyards, which were in the suburbs of the town, the parishioners objected to join in the movement. Consequently the parish of St. Mary Magdalene (with Trinity district) had to provide a cemetery, and being ultimately joined by the extensive and adjoining parish of Bishop's Hull, a Board of the joint parishes was appointed, eight members being elected from St. Mary's and five from Bishop's Hull.

A beautiful field of eight acres was purchased on the North side of the Bishop's Hull-road, and within one mile of the centre of the town.

The site commands fine views of the surrounding vale, and it is as good a spot as could have been selected.

It was opened in August, 1854, and is divided by a broad carriage drive into two parts, that for the Church of England on the Eastern side being afterwards consecrated by the Bishop of the Diocese.

The whole of the ground (except the roads and paths) is divided into grave spaces, each 9ft. long by 4ft. wide, and spaces for children 6ft. by 3ft. When families desire to purchase, these spaces are sold, the price being according to the situation. The money once paid to the Burial

Board, the appointed space becomes the sole property of the purchaser, who may make several interments in the same space one over the other, provided the upper one is not less than 6ft. from the surface. There is no charge made for "common interments;" but in that case, the ground not being purchased, no erection is allowed, but flowers may be planted. A monument or railing may be erected over any purchased grave space, subject to the approval of the Burial Board. In the consecrated ground the fees for the erection go to the vicars of the respective parishes, as was formerly the case when the parish churchyards were in use. There is a printed scale of fees, charges, and rules—a copy of which may be had of the clerk, or seen at the Lodge—the charges for non-parishioners being very much higher than for parishioners. There is no fee for erection of monuments on unconsecrated ground, the amount being voluntary to the ministers of the several Dissenting denominations. The Roman Catholics have a separate ground allotted for their use, which is on the South-Western side of the ground.

A large number of interments take place annually at the Taunton Cemetery, as the various chapel-yards are closed; and the fees at the vaults of the Church of the Holy Trinity have been raised to seven guineas for each interment. The old part of Wilton churchyard is unused, and the original yard of St. James' partially closed.

The cost of the ground was £2,300 9s. 8d., and of the buildings, enclosures, roads, planting, &c., upwards of £3,000 more. The money was borrowed on the mortgage of the rates, to be paid off within twenty years, so that a large portion is now cleared off. The land was purchased from the executors of the late Mr. Maclean, and it is a singular fact that the widow of that gentleman was amongst the first persons buried in the new cemetery.

In conclusion we would mention a curious little circumstance that occurred in reference to the establishment of the Burial Board, &c. When the question of a new cemetery was first talked of in Taunton, and months before any ground was selected or arrangements were made, an esteemed friend invited us to make a survey of the most appropriate spots around the town. The very site we selected was that of the present cemetery. Our friend further suggested that we should make a plan and show the grounds laid out. This we did, on precisely the arrangements since adopted.

The Taunton cemetery is of great value and importance to the health and beauty of the town; and although the cost has been heavy, the payments, being made out of the poor-rates and spread over a period of twenty years, fall far lighter than they would otherwise. The manner in which the place is kept is creditable, and the

various rules and regulations in use have had the sanction of the Secretary of State, and are quite necessary to the good government of the grounds and buildings.

The cemetery is beautifully laid out with roads, walks, &c., and planted with choice trees and shrubs. It is open to the public during the whole week, and locked only by night. It is a favourite resort, and many a bereaved one takes a fond pleasure in attending to the flowers or shrubs planted to perpetuate the remembrance of the missing friend. We have seen the Continental system adopted of strewing the grave with fresh flowers on the anniversary of the interment; and we know one case where a beautiful white cross springs out of the ground every Spring, composed of pure white snowdrops, and forms a most striking and appropriate remembrance of a past friend. We remember that the Egyptians, with all their confused ideas of the Resurrection and the future state, placed ears of wheat in the hand of the departed, as a type of the renewal of the body; the Apostle speaks in eloquent terms on the subject, in the 15th chapter of the 1st Corinthians.

The poet to which we have already referred, also says—

God's Acre! yes that blessed name imparts  
Comfort to those who in the grave have sown  
The seed that they had garnered in their hearts,  
Their bread of life, alas! no more their own.

Surely a quiet walk around this beautiful spot ought to teach us a lesson not soon to be effaced. The departed glory of the illustrious, "the short and simple annals of the poor," and the holy texts so appropriately strewn around, cannot fail to produce an impression upon the most thoughtless, or the votary of pleasure, business, or fashion.

But to return to our description. There is a pretty little Gothic chapel attached to each division, although, for the sake of appearance and of the fact that "here all trifling differences should be forgotten," we could have wished them placed side by side. Near the entrance gates is the lodge-keeper's residence, whose duty it is to keep the place in good order, to carry out the rules and regulations of the Board, and to assist in the arrangement of interments.

There are numerous monuments and headstones, many of them very beautiful, and all free from those objectionable quotations and "marrow-bones illustrations" that disfigure our old graveyards. We have inspected many burial-places, but have seldom seen a more tasteful collection of monuments than in the Taunton cemetery.

We have now conducted our readers to the last of the "Lions" of our town, and have pointed out, in a rambling and probably incomplete manner, some of the

particulars connected with the history, rise and progress of each establishment. We have endeavoured to embrace such topics as would generally interest the public, and to avoid tedious repetition or prosy details. If we have succeeded in creating or encouraging a taste or love for the many peculiarities and accounts of our loyal and esteemed old town, we feel rewarded; but if not, we trust that our readers will bear in mind that the papers were all written at uncertain and odd times, after business hours, and many of them while we ought to have been quietly reposing in the arms of Morpheus.

All contain an amount of information never before published, and may afford considerable assistance to a future historian of Taunton. It is now half a century since Savage's History was written, and the progress and alteration of the various public establishments in the town have been immense. The researches of historians, archaeologists and antiquarians have been considerable, and what is now required is a well-written, interesting History of Taunton, embracing the above-mentioned subjects, combined with a compressed edition of former books.

We mentioned in a previous paper that our object was to induce Tauntonians to reply to or correct any remarks or assertions which appeared doubtful or uncertain; and we now beg to return our thanks to those gentlemen who have taken that trouble, and to many who have kindly rendered us valuable assistance in procuring information, often difficult in obtaining. We also must not forget to thank others who, by their flattering remarks, have encouraged us throughout the last seven years; and we shall ever prize their correspondence. And although at one time we were called upon to break a lance with a powerful champion of antiquarian lore, yet our readers may be pleased to know that the occurrence has not since prevented the good feeling so desirable among the lovers of Taunton, past and present.

TAUNTON MASS. (U.S.).—"Second Edition."

A Daniel: Still I say a second Daniel.

SHAKESPEARE'S *Merchant of Venice*.

A rival appears on the scene.

*Old Song.*

Before us lies a neat and compact little volume, entitled "The Taunton Directory;" but upon opening it we observe something strange and novel in its general appearance, and particularly notice the letters Mass., U.S., after the name of the place. Our readers will at once perceive that the book does not refer to our own neat and thriving town, but to a younger and more progressive place on the other side of the Atlantic, so named by its founders, about the year 1637, after Taunton in Somerset.

From an inspection of the said Directory, published about eight or ten years ago, it appears that Taunton is

the chief town of the county of Bristol, in the State of Massachusetts, in the United States of America. Although but a very short account is given of the place, we have selected some details respecting our namesake, which we trust will probably interest our readers.

We propose following the account, as laid down in the volume before us, and observe that there are four Banks, which, by the way, are placed before the Churches:—

The Taunton Bank, established 1812, in Exchange-street.  
The Bristol County

Bank	"	1833, in Bank-row.
The Machinists' Bank	"	1847, in Taunton Hotel.
The Bristol County		
Savings' Bank	"	1846, in Bank-row.

We observe that there are twelve places of worship, and also note that there are but twelve clergymen to serve them; and we do not see any others named among the residents. The names of the churches and their date of establishment are as follows:—

The first Trinitarian Church,	founded in Westville, in 1637.
Unitarian Church,	founded in Summer-st., in 1637.
St. Thomas' Church,	founded in Church-st., in 1740.
Baptist Church,	founded in Winthrop-st., in 1819.
The second Trinitarian Church,	founded in North-street, in 1821.
Universalists' Church,	founded in High-street, in 1825.
The first Methodist-Episcopal Church,	founded in Weir-street, in 1830.
Roman Catholic Church,	founded in North-street, in 1831.
The third Trinitarian Church,	founded in Westminster-st., in 1837.
Central Christian Church,	founded in Tapscoot-street, in 1847.
Taunton Central Church,	founded in Cohannet-st., in 1854.
The second Freewill Baptist Church,	founded in Spring-street, in 1856.

The Spiritualists hold their meetings at the Town Hall every Sabbath. Each church is provided with an organ, choristers and Sunday school, and is governed by deacons.

It appears that Taunton had no municipal corporation, but was governed by justices, as our own town; and we would observe in passing, that although provided with but twelve pastors or clergymen, Taunton boasts of no less

than 60 justices, who are assisted by nine councillors; so that the people seem to get more Law than Gospel. And again, whereas in England we are generally content with one coroner to each county or large city, Taunton (Mass.) requires two for the township (or commonwealth, as it is termed).

In scanning the lists of the names of the inhabitants, we observe the frequent recurrence of Old Testament names, and hence conclude that the people still maintain many of those Puritanical customs and manners for which their ancestors were noted. The Jasons, Hiram, Burzillais, Jeremiahs, Abigail, Elijahs, Joshua, Jabez, Zebulons, &c., occupy a large portion of the Directory. Many of the surnames are similar to our own; and even the trades and names often agree—"Pollard, builder, Taunton," may be seen upon the carts, and would suggest a very familiar appearance.

With regard to the public buildings, the American Tauntonians also show their fondness for law and officers, for we observe no less than five court-houses to the town, besides the following officers:—Town clerk, select men, assessors, constable, fish-wardens, fence-viewers, surveyors of lumbers, pound keepers, field driver, surveyors of highway, wood measurers, sellers of weights and measures; also the police and several minor officers. As we mentioned before, Taunton is the seat of government for the county, and was made a "city" in 1864; and hence we find that the various officers here reside. The principal county buildings are as follow:—

The County Court offices, "located" in Mill-street.

"	Gaol	"	Broadway.
"	Treasury	"	County Buildings.
"	Registry	"	"
"	Probate Office	"	"
"	Deeds	"	"
"	Sheriff's	"	"

The State Lunatic Asylum " Davenport-street.

Among the Public Companies we find the following:—  
Taunton Britannia and Plate Company.

"	Iron Work	"
"	Foundry and Machine	"
"	Phoenix Manufactory	"
"	Cotton and Machine	"
"	Hotel	"
"	Locomotive Manufactory	"
"	Enamel Cloth	"
"	Oil Cloth	"
"	Union Telegraph	"
"	Gas Light	"
"	Tack, &c.	"

Among the Public Societies, &c., we observe—

The Taunton Social Library Society

"	Historical	"
"	Debating	"
"	Mechanics'	"
"	Young Men's Library.	"

But we cannot fail noticing the absence of any charitable societies, any hospital, infirmary, workhouse, &c.

The Freemasons have a Lodge, which was established in 1798, and meets the same evenings as that in our town. There are also Lodges of Odd Fellows, Foresters, &c.

Taunton Mass. possesses three weekly newspapers, viz:—  
The *American Republic*, published in School-street.

*Taunton Democrat*, " Main-street.

*Bristol County Telegram*, also " Main-street.

And one daily paper, *The Taunton Daily Gazette*.

We observe that all the various trades and manufacture are carried on on a small scale, but that Taunton possesses no manufacture of any considerable importance. It appears a trading rather than a manufacturing place, although we notice makers of the following articles beyond the usual style in the town:—Ambrotypes, belt-hooks, blacklead, bobbins, brass foundry, Britannia-ware carpeting, clocks, cigars, cloth and woollen goods, enamel-leather, files, guns, ploughs, pottery ware, sails, ship material, saws, &c.

In the educational department we find the County College, in Academy-street, established in 1792, under trustees, several schools and seminaries, besides the Sunday schools already alluded to.

At the end of our little book is given, with some ostentation, a page headed "Wealth of Taunton," and consists of a list of the annual assessment on all persons and estates within the district. The advertisement sheets are worthy of inspection. The chemists puff off "Shaker's Herbs and Leeches;" the lawyers advertise; the grocers offer cast-iron beam "plows;" cement drain-pipes may be had under the Town Hall; and cigars, smoking and chewing tobacco, adjoining; while at the "Taunton Monumental Works" you "are politely solicited to purchase unique tombs of manufactured marble."

A book of considerable size, entitled "The Ministry of Taunton," gives an account of the lives of the principal pastors and ministers, but which time will not allow us to particularise.

A few years ago some communications were received by our townsmen from the Atlantic Tauntonians, and cordial congratulations passed. We believe books and histories were exchanged, and probably we may again occasionally hear from our Transatlantic namesakes.







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June 1, 1953  
JUL 2 4 1953